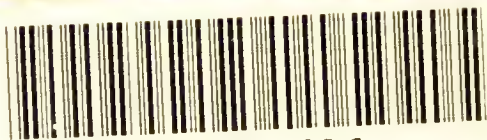


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TALES OF MEDICAL STUDENTS

To.

Brian Hodgson Esq
from his brother
The Author

9/12/99.


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Hodgson's Tales

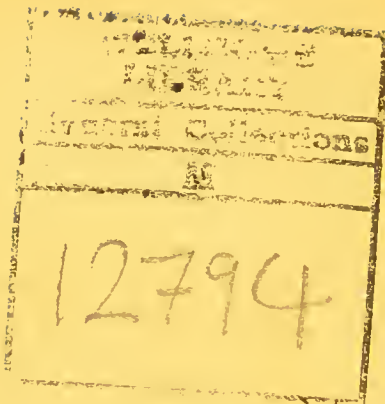
of
Medical Students

BY
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OF SYDNEY

London
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PREFACE.

I KNOW of no other author who has written a general sketch dealing chiefly with medical students. My characters are true to life. If you wish confirmation of my assertion you need only ask your own doctors, who, unless they had the misfortune to have been educated in trying circumstances, in the poorest of educational centres, will admit that I have not exaggerated. Had I toned down the incidents they would not be true to life. I could have made them more emphatic and still been within the circle of veracity.

So far, I am a "realist." I admire the naked truth.

I do not ignore the claims of "Idealism." Some of these essays, I think, show a little imagination. When, however, I have dealt in Idealism and fancy, I have endeavoured to handle it in such a way that even a simple-minded reader can tell at once it is absolute imagination, and does not pretend to be anything else.

I am indebted to the Editor and Proprietor of *Truth* for allowing me to reprint some of these

sketches, which were first placed before the public in that newspaper. "Mada, the Last Man," I wrote in 1886. The original MS., which I still preserve, has been read by my friends privately ever since then. It was first printed and published, however, in *Truth*.

R. HODGSON.



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HODGSON'S

TALES OF MEDICAL STUDENTS.

THE BLACK LEAD CURE.

I BUMPED bang up against Goodyer in Piccadilly one day.

"Hulloa, Goodyer, how are you?"

"By Jove! is it you, Hodgson?" responded Goodyer. "Come and dine with me at the Cri. I've the greatest joke in the world to tell you—something that'll make you burst. I've scored off the Human Dictionary."

"All right," said I; "I am with you." So to the Criterion we strolled to spend a couple of hours off duty. Goodyer was a great deal in our set at college.

His philosophy ran in this kind of vein:—"If a student doesn't knock about how can he expect to be a competent family physician when he is a doctor? It isn't feasible. Family practice is not always confined to sanctimonious mothers. The young bloods want physic, and you have to drop

down to the physic they want without asking many questions. When I settle down into practice I don't intend to restrict my labours to hideous old maids and their pet poodle dogs. Not a bit of it. By the time I'm through the final I shall be competent to dose every man jack of them who has saved enough to consult me. It's rather hard work absorbing such a liberal education as mine, and following up experiments in strange phases of social life. The special branch that engages my attention in the present session is Psychology manifest in the artifices of the gay. It's the most difficult and comprehensive study of the whole lot. That's why I spend so much time at it. You fellows may laugh but I hate a smattering. A night's practical acquaintance with the subject, enlivened by demonstrations by its high priestess, is as good in its own way as a lecture by Dr. Dry Ossa on repairs of fractured skulls.

"I pay pretty stiffly for both branches of education. My ambition is to be a good all round man. There's nothing in being a cramped specialist confining the profundity of my erudition, say to the tip of the left little toe. It is too narrow to harmonise with the breadth of my liberal education. I'll drive my medical ploughshare through the whole human family. From the human beast in his savagery to the human saint in his sickliness."

Here stood the matured Goodyer in Piccadilly, a full-blown doctor, dressed up in glossy silk hat,

lavender kids and black frock coat, that fitted him like a glove. The cane he swung was a marvel to scrutinise. His patent leathers shone like a mirror. Goodyer was the student who christened Green the Human Dictionary.

"When I see Green sweating up in the library," Goodyer used to say; "I always slip over to his table to read. It saves an awful lot of time, and to a man like me that means something. I work at high pressure to keep up to scratch. My brain is a sort of triple expansion mental engine. Makes the most of every pound pressure of steam in the boiler. Wastes nothing. Green's very handy as an accessory in my engine, as a condensing tank. When I'm wiring in and get stuck at some tangled problem, I don't trouble to forage it out from text books, but I just shout out to Green: 'I say, Green, old man, what the deuce is the red colour of the blood really due to, is it the hæmin, which is a hydrochlorate of hæmatin, or is the hæmatin a hydrochlorate of hæmin; which way does the thing pan out?' The Dictionary pitches back the answer without looking up from his work. That's the way to do it. That's something like. Saves a lot of time having a self-opening dictionary at your elbow. It does Green good, too. Prevents him forgetting any rudiments in medicine. If it were not for my kindness to Dictionary in this way, he'd be plucked three exams. out of every four he went up for. Green's a decent

fellow, so I don't mind helping him. Some night I've no doubt I shall have to reciprocate when I drop across Green down the Haymarket way. Very likely in his turn he'll call out, 'I say, Goodyer, old man, what do you do when they take off the back hair,' and I shall let out; sling it out of the window, old man. Don't be fooled about."

Green's father was secretary of a big banking company in Lombard Street, and of the six children, Green was the only boy. One boy and five girls. Green was number three in the line of descent. As Goodyer said:—

"Whether he looked up to the elders or down on the youngsters it didn't matter, he was always surrounded by a sea of girls. What could you expect from a fellow who had been reared in a model kind of harem family? It made him soft. Listen to his phrases, regular women's expressions. He even acquired women's ways of moving his fingers about. Nothing indicates greater degeneration in a man than *that*. I'm hanged if Dictionary is a *handsome* man either. What with spectacles, and poking his nose close to everything he wants to see, I'm not surprised the fellows get wild with his antics."

Nature cursed Green with a perpetually flushed face, and the strangest mouth that was ever morticed into ANY face; it constantly dribbled. He was quite as bad as a curly retriever dog watching his master dine. When Green used the microscope the table

was wet with drippings. This peculiarity led Goodyer in his second year at Bart.'s to thoroughly work up the physiology of salivation. Becoming proficient in the subject he wanted to demonstrate to the class, professor included, that Green's anatomy was incomplete.

"He lacks vaso-constrictor filaments of the sympathetic nerve," said Goodyer. "These nerve fibres conduct checks to salivation, a pair of reins, as it were, to check the water horses. If a man hasn't any reins he can't stop the horses bolting. Dictionary hasn't any reins to his salivary runaways, and if he were not so pig-headed in his objection, I would dissect the side of his face for you to show that I'm right and prove to the class that the nerve filaments are almost absent. There wouldn't be much scar or disfigurement when the wound healed. They'd only think he'd been in a dynamite explosion in the chemical laboratory."

It was this deficiency in Green's anatomy that decided his father to educate him as a doctor. Green senior had consulted pretty well all the distinguished members of the faculty who styled themselves specialists on "Slobbering at the Mouth when the Stomach is full." These eminent specialists examined, diagnosed, prescribed and treated Green junior with all known remedies and systems, but without avail. Eventually Green senior, as a move in economy, and in order to be sure nothing had been missed, dedicated his son to our profession.

"You will be able to find out then what really *is* the matter with you," said his father.

Strange to relate, Green turned out to be the most brilliant scholar of his year—a perfect phenomenon.

"It strikes me," said Goodyer, when Green won a scholarship which was no earthly use to him as his father had plenty of money, "that Dictionary hasn't any inhibitory nerves to his brains either. There is no restraint on his intellect. His brains, like his saliva, are overflowing and running to waste from an exhaustless supply. Some of our surgeons on a slack day in the operating theatre ought to trephine his skull and see whether they can't turn the mental tap off. It's unnatural to have mental ability and saliva pouring out of each opening like that. I shall have to invent a break for the Dictionary if no one else will."

When the human Dictionary was asked a book question he immediately furnished a dictionary answer. He could not be stumped. His prodigious memory helped to make him a consultant in after years. It was *not solely* due to this, however, but to the fact that in conjunction with this Green was *devoid* of professional style and manner. Patients, therefore, never transferred themselves to Green's roll of *clientèle*. Thus no man ever lost a patient by introducing Green to a case. Nature never intended him for a doctor, but only for a human dictionary. He was a dictionary, he is

a dictionary, and he will be a dictionary, Green without end.

By a strange coincidence, Green's five sisters were the prettiest girls a man would see in a day's saunter through a fashionable throng. When confidential enquiries were made of the Dictionary as to what his sisters were like—for when all's said and done, when a fellow has sisters every other fellow wants to know what they are like—the Dictionary would slobber out, "Oh, they are not up to much." As Green was accurate in the dimensions of a microbe, this statement was accepted as true and the matter dropped. The mystery of Green's ugliness and his sisters' beauty was therefore never discussed or solved by our students. This is a great loss to literature. Green senior never ought to have tried to rear a boy. He undertook more than he could accomplish, and his best endeavours resulted in a dictionary.

As this is a fair description of the two men, Goodyer and Green, I can now proceed with this history.

"Dictionary," said Goodyer as we sat at dinner, "struck a rattling good mark, an old buffer named Earl Dasham. It appears his lordship dismounted from a hack after a canter in Rotten Row to show himself off, and the brute, in dislodging a fly from his flank, accidentally kicked the Earl's shin. What between the crusty old port, the crusty old peer, and

the kicking gelding, a piece of British aristocracy sloughed away. Dropped out. Dictionary attended, and the wound healed kindly with the exception of skinning over. The arrest of repair of tissue was coincident with the return to town of the Countess. Though it may seem trivial, yet it is an important point in the surgical treatment of the case. Earl Dasham became restless, lost his temper, couldn't sleep, and kept the whole establishment in a state of ferment. Still the skin refused to grow. It wouldn't grow for an Earl, it wouldn't grow for a surgeon, and it wouldn't grow for a Countess's daily prayers. Dictionary was unremitting in his attention, and tried everything recorded in every other dictionary of surgery. He analysed drops of pus from the wound, examined pieces of skin from the edges under a powerful microscope, and so on, but all to no purpose. With nursing and worry the Countess grew pale, and the Earl fumed up in a white hot rage, and used the lowest Billingsgate colloquialisms on record. He called Dictionary an ass, fitted only to attend slobbery-mouthed school girls. The Countess must write his dismissal. The exhausted Countess did so. In a polite note on embossed paper, bearing the crest of the family coat of arms, she referred to the family leg, and told Dictionary to go to blazes, as they intended calling in another practitioner. Dictionary didn't take the matter to heart; he had so often been dismissed from

his cases because he would insist on treating the disease instead of treating the patient, that he was not offended in the least. Having got rid of Dictionary they sent for me. When I heard Green had been at the case I went round and saw him and discussed the case.

“‘No surgeon,’ said Dictionary to me, ‘can make the granulations skin over. I’ve tried everything, and it’s hopeless. Skin grafting is a failure here. Red lotion is useless. Black wash doesn’t tell. When you have had a turn you’ll be in the same predicament, and you’ll be stigmatised a fool, the same way as I am. If it is even twenty years, he’ll have to die with a bit of skin short in his anatomy.’

“‘Wait a moment,’ said I, ‘this is just a case in which the comprehensive nature of my education at Bart.’s, which you so much deprecated as a student, will assist me. If our men from Bart.’s can’t cure this no other men from any other hospital can cure it either. I think I can see an opening. You won’t quite understand it. If I don’t come out on top in this instance I’ll clear out to the colonies.’ Dictionary laughed and slobbered dreadfully, so I helped myself to a couple of his cigars and came away. He keeps good cigars, Hodgson.

“Next day I paid the Earl a visit and thoroughly surveyed the situation. I was on my metal and also on the *qui vive* for everything. His Lordship sulked in a light invalid bed. His leg swung with a pendu-

lum motion in a fracture box. It was smothered in dressings, looking as if he had pushed it through the centre of a plum-pudding. I never saw such fortifications as Dictionary had built to keep off microbes. They were all so afraid of germs that the Countess was the only person allowed to dress the wound, and she had to be specially disinfected for the purpose. She retired from the room to prepare herself for the ordeal of wound-dressing. It must have been very trying to her. Having left us, the Earl explained the process she was undergoing. It was in strict conformity with Dictionary's orders. It is a wonder I did not laugh outright at the precautions they took to ward off danger when no danger threatened from the quarter they anticipated.

“ ‘ Dr. Green's instructions,’ said the Earl, ‘ were to wash the body in cold water—the pores of the skin contracting allowed foreign matter to be washed off the surface and not into the skin. Next, the body to be washed in hot water, whereby the skin relaxed, the pores dilated, and soap, water and a scrubbing-brush removed foreign substances from the interstices of the cuticle. Third, lave the body in weak alcohol to dissolve alkaloids. Her Ladyship finds twelve bottles of champagne just enough for this purpose each day. Finally, complete the toilet by dipping the hands in dilute carbolic lotion, 1 in 200 ; dry ; dip again in perchloride solution, 1 in 1000 ; wipe with antiseptic gauze. The attendant may then be

pronounced sufficiently free from germs to approach the wound. Dr. Green assured me some professional nurses had been known to evade the irksome routine, secretly reading some trashy novel instead of disinfecting themselves. When they reappeared at the bedside at the expiration of the allotted time, they were always dressed in a clean collar and fresh pair of cuffs.'

"The poor Countess, more exhausted and haggard than before, re-entered the room at this juncture. She wore a stiff gown, each fold of which must have sheltered ten million microbes. She constituted the incarnation of a withering satire on the dread of germs in modern surgery—a parody on the surgeon who is extremely careful to disinfect his hands, but keeps his mouth reeking with rotten teeth, and his hair full of dust. She was a beautiful magnet, drawing attention to the necessity for general cleanliness in direct opposition to the absurdity of microscopic disinfection. The Bouquet of Champagne rose in fragrance from the inside of her neckerchief. She proceeded to remove the dressings and exposed a healthy, evenly-granulated ulcer—slightly indolent, perhaps, but otherwise normal. All that the wound wanted was a thin layer of skin over it.

" 'Pray how long has it been like this?'

" 'Three weeks, doctor, never spreading nor healing over. We are in quite despair about it.'

" 'Just so,' said I 'it seems to me one of those

cases in which the renowned carbon treatment would be of inestimable service, of the greatest value.'

" 'What's the carbon treatment?' said the Earl; 'I never heard of it. Dr. Green has enumerated every known remedy—why didn't the ass try it! He never mentioned a carbon treatment.'

" 'It is extremely dirty, but wonderful as a diagnostic agent; I hardly think you would be prepared to tolerate the mess.'

" 'Never mind the dirt if any good is likely to accrue. The Countess and Miss De Curtney are here to carry out the orders. That's what *they are for*. Any mess can be removed.'

" Miss De Curtney favoured us with her company as he spoke. She was a nice smart slip of a woman, well set up. Fifteen years younger than the Countess, with a pair of ruby lips that, 'pon my word, the old fellow might have done worse than salute in a fatherly way, in a purely platonic manner. I noticed her slyly taking stock of me as if in doubt of something. She had a wonderful eye for a man.

" I made up my mind to try the carbon treatment. The family circle managed to understand my instructions after an hour's argument and reiteration.

" We all four congregated again next morning to see the result. The Earl reclined on the invalid couch before an open window overlooking the lawn. The wind blew directly across his leg, and gently fanned the fracture box. The room and everything

it contained were smothered with soot. You see, my Dear fellow," continued Goodyer, "I mixed up eight packets of black lead with two pounds of lamp-black. It was all carbon, and in about as objectionable a form as you could wish for. I dare say a pound of it had blown about the apartment, and settled down everywhere. A quarter of a pound more was slowly following suit from the heap on his leg. We all bent over the ulcer to ascertain its condition. There was no change, not the slightest. I walked round the back of Miss De Curtney and beheld on the right hand side of her white collar two magnificent finger prints—such finger prints as a means of identification as Galton would have gazed at in rapture for hours. Her face was smutty, barring the lips. I examined the ridges of Earl Dasham's finger tips to confirm my diagnosis of the case. After *that* it didn't take me long to express an opinion. It rattled off somehow like this :—

"A cure could confidently be expected within a month. The Earl, full of conjugal affection, was worried by the distress his illness caused his family. His fine sensibilities were ruffled by the havoc in the health of the Countess through nursing. My views were corroborated by the aspect of the Earl's fingers. The Countess *must* [go^o away for a change. It was imperative. She required more medical care than his Lordship. Domestic sacrifices must cease. Family devotion was no longer demanded. Miss De

Curtney would do all that was necessary; she was quite competent to do *that*, and more. Perfectly safe to leave the Earl and the ulcer to her care. The difficulty would be settled. All would be well by the time her Ladyship returned. The Countess, overborne by talk, though still slightly dubious, gave way and advanced no further objection. She left by the night mail for Scarborough.'

"The blacklead and lampblack wasn't all thrown out of doors as soon as she drove to the station. Oh, dear, no. That *would* have been brutal. The carbon treatment was continued, but in a greatly modified form. It consisted in the Earl eating one charcoal biscuit a day. Yes, servants notice a lot, and what they don't see they make up and believe they see. Nothing further was to be gained by keeping a peer in the exalted status of a chimney sweep. About the *ulcer*! I nearly forgot it. It was protected by a wire cage and never looked at for a week. When the cage was taken off it had nearly skinned over, and the Earl was able to execute a new step in dancing he had picked up at the Mabile when last in Paris—a gay old dog. Miss De Curtney continued in close attendance for fear the Earl might forget the daily allowance of one charcoal biscuit. She insisted on him taking it, so he said. They must have bought the biscuits wholesale, for I noticed twenty of them amongst the rose trees below the window when I crossed the lawn one day.

"Just prior to the Countess's return I dropped in unexpectedly, and at an inauspicious moment. It was unfortunate. His Lordship jumped up in such a hurry he knocked over the champagne bottle with a crash and sent Miss De Curtney's cigarette flying out of her mouth by a sweep of his own cigar. Things being restored to the *status quo ante*, the Earl bubbled over with thanks to me and curses on Dictionary.

"'Had I remained in that man's care,' said he, the health of the Countess would have been totally wrecked and I should have been on the broad of my back now. Theory is all very well until a man has an ulcer of the leg that won't heal. It requires more than theory then. I might just as well have been attended by a medical woman as that theorist Dr. Green, although he is the most learned man in the faculty. Before I was well kicked I never understood the reason medical women rank so much below the standard of medical men. It's as plain as a pike staff now. By Gad, sir, the world doesn't understand. Are you going, Dr. Goodyer? I'll give you a cheque to cover all, and I want your word that you'll look after another case as well as you looked after me. Don't let her want for anything. Good bye, and many thanks.'

"I met the Dictionary's sister Flo the other day and she said their house had been smothered in

blacks for weeks. The chimneys had been repeatedly swept to keep up the supply of soot or carbon, or charcoal or something. Fires of different kinds of wood, coal, and tar had constantly burned in separate rooms to supply various forms of carbon for experiment. Dictionary always emerged from his laboratory as black as a nigger and as ugly as a sweep. It was ended now, but her poor brother declared carbon had no curative effect or medicinal virtue whatever on healthy ulcers. The four dogs, six rabbits, and eight frogs that were thrown against the leg of the wooden rocking horse till they had ulcers recovered quite as quickly without any dressing at all as they did under the soot treatment—excepting, of course, the two poor things who died. ‘I wish,’ continued Flo, with a pained look in her face, ‘you had never told my brother Earl Dasham was cured by black lead. He says the whole treatment and *rationale* of it is a mystery to him, and he has quite given up trying to understand it.”

MADA, THE LAST MAN.

The Philosophy of Human Extinction.

I WAS lying on the broad of my back basking beneath the shade of a gumtree, when overcome by warmth and indolence I dreamed this essay.

The scientific calculations are true, the deductions and conclusions were cradled in the phantasy of somnolence.

A ray of sunlight darted between the leaves and struck my eyelashes. Its father, the sun, revels far, far away, as a huge incandescent mass, which although at the present moment of terrific temperature yet is cooling down gradually, is condensing and solidifying. Though sad to contemplate, there can be no room to doubt it, as some of the sun's heat reaches the earth, and if the mass be losing heat it must surely be getting colder and colder. It cannot part with heat and remain at the same temperature too. Consequently it is only a matter of time for the sun to become absolutely cold.

Helmholtz, and other noted scientists, in discussing how the present heat of the sun is maintained, clearly prove that the sun need only contract to the extent

of forty yards in a year to produce as much heat as is now radiated into space. The friction of constituent particles of so enormous a mass, would be so gigantic as they crush, crowd and rush together that they would evolve the specified amount of heat. Gradually contracting and cooling, it will take the sun ten million years to grow cold. If the calculation be worked backwards into the dreamy past, arithmetic will prove that our sun has already existed twenty million years.

Think, then, as I thought, O, gentle reader, what a vast difference there is between the life of the sun and the popularity of a politician!

Many other sunbeams, in playful frolic, poured down on the grass around me, and by persistent volleys and charges caused my thoughts to wander to our own pet globe—the globe upon which we all live.

I remembered that the earth itself, like the sun, is also cooling down and growing colder and colder. Were it not for the vapours and clouds which envelope and surround our globe, and prevent radiation of the heat of the earth into space, learned men compute that in less than twenty-four hours the whole face of the earth and all on it would be completely frozen. But in spite of this safeguard the earth is cooling down at the rate of one degree in one thousand years. In other words, in thirty thousand years the average temperature of Sydney, which is now 62° F., will be reduced to 32° F. That

is, to freezing point. With an average temperature at freezing point, sheep and Chinese gardens, in spite of a boasted fiscal protection, will be unknown industries in New South Wales. If he wish for such genial warmth as we now enjoy, the Australian native will have to emigrate to the tropics of Africa, Asia or America. In one hundred thousand years the Calcutta thermometer will stand at 20° F. in the sun, and minus 15° F. in the shade.

This date corresponds with the time my last man, whose life history is appended below, will dot down in his diary, Anno Domini 101,897. What a lot of figures to write!

The human species, having risen by acquisition and evolution from an exceedingly low origin, of which taints remain even to the present day, advanced to a remarkable degree. From subjection to the darkness of night, the species emerged to the epoch of wood fires, from wood fires to torch lights, from torch lights to composite candles, from candles to oil lamps, from lamps to gas, from gas to electric light in the advanced cities of the world.

The vitality of the sun's rays and the heat of the globe are adequate to cause further advance—to push man onwards to his maximum. To the era when he will be more intelligent, less hoggish, better physically and socially, morally and mentally. To an elevated pinnacle, incomprehensible to the present generation. To the development when his stature

may be ten feet high, his brain the size of a hat-box, and his measurement 85 inches round the chest. That should be about his zenith.

Yet the time must come, will come, is coming, when, having reached the greatest fame, he will inevitably decay and wither under the devastating grip of increasing cold. With the chilling of the world, the cooling of the sun, vegetable and animal life will disappear from our globe.

Such chilling changes are generally admitted by those versed in the subject. They agree that the failing of the sun will lead to the death of all living organisms on earth. Each scientist demonstrates in his own particular branch of learning the *pros* and *cons* of the tide which is floating the solar system into lethargy.

Mankind, furnished, supported and guarded by implements invented by his ingenuity, might postpone his extinction for a brief period; but the end is certain when golden sunshine fails to charm our globe—when King Frost holds undisputed sway.

Already his advance-guard is here, and the waters of the polar regions have become ice—silent, glistening ice. As neither vegetation nor animals can utilise nourishment, nor assimilate food stuffs requisite for their sustenance, unless it first be dissolved in a liquid, the flora and fauna of Arctic regions have practically faded from existence, through inability to use and scarcity of food. Requiring water they have been presented with ice.

From the poles the process will extend to the equator. The icy grasp gradually narrowing the warm zone round the earth, and driving life away from the higher latitudes down to the zero of latitude itself.

The unfortunate vegetable kingdom, unable to roam in search of nourishment, will be the first to be blighted by increasing frost. Fragrant flowers, variegated plants, herbs, cereals, roots and mosses will be unknown. The picture will show a vast expanse of arid waste, like the Great African Sahara of to-day, life only in evidence at isolated oases.

Stunted, miniature shrubs around the wells lending their weight to emphasise the devastation in which they survive. All nature eventually frozen into one solid, immovable, unalterable block of ice.

The green colouring matter of leaves, which is termed chlorophyl, is formed by the action of the chemical rays of sunlight. Hence it is doomed to speedy demise.

Then will man himself feel the true pinch of poverty. All those trivial comforts and surroundings which even the poorest now enjoy will be lost to the race. He will be unstimulated by the luxuries of tropical climes, and have difficulty in procuring his food. Consequently, he will deteriorate in *physique* and intelligence. Mental and corporeal degeneration must ensue. The subtleties and polish of culture and refinement will retrogress to a primitive

state. The life of the Laplander and Esquimaux wallowing in filth and revelling in foul odours is a far superior picture to this—the existence of an unclean animal who can talk. Procreation reduced to its lowest ebb, would cause humanity, if I dare to call the final stragglers by such a high eulogistic name, to be numbered by a few units.

My fancy settled on the equatorial belt which circles our globe, and I seemed to see the last few men parading thereon in their war-paint. The war-paint was adherent, dry dirt. Each individual kept strictly to the line, as this was the warmest part of the earth. Warmth was at a high premium. Their ability in balancing was marvellous. It reminded me of Blondin on the tight rope. When they reached the last few decadent potatoes, which, of course, could only find sufficient warmth to maintain their vitality by growing from the equatorial line itself, the men carefully hopped over them, fearing to injure the few scanty, colourless leaves of their last earthly luxury.

The final human squad gradually diminished in numbers, and it was ludicrous to behold their artifices to try and secure the warmest spots and to cultivate their plants. The "Artificial Warmth and Sunlight Farm Company, Limited," had long gone into liquidation. The application of its life-prolonging schemes had been lost in antiquity, and man remained without their valuable help.

Eventually but one person existed. He was a man!

No one can be audacious enough to assert that there will be no last man when a human race exists. Live when he will, live where he will, one human being must be the last of the species. The events of ordinary life are inconsistent with the simultaneous death of the last two.

Both breaths would not be simultaneously expelled at the last. Both hearts would not beat their last strokes synchronously. The probability is that the last man will survive the last man but one for a year or two.

I say advisedly the last man, for the last of the human species must be a male. The argument in support of it is as follows:—Man must outlive woman, for, taken all in all, he is the most artful and cunning being in creation. It follows then that he will hold out the longest. The only being who could stand any chance against him is a woman. But recollect that even in boasted civilisation his womenfolks do not fare well when they run counter to his wishes. If there be a choice morsel or a delightful pleasure for one only, it is an axiom that the man has it. What chance then could a woman have with a ferocious, hungry villain when the earth was enveloped in a sphere of decadent humanity. Should it finally come to cannibalism, then surely it is better to eat the most delicate and tender instead

of the tough and old. The caprice of appetite and the voice of nature would be too pronounced for the gentler sex to succeed. The Lord of Creation will retain his title, in fact and in deed, to the end.

It will be the lot of the last man to stand alone on the frozen globe. His ancestors, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, and children will have sought the grave, and one solitary being will bear the honour and title of the last man.

He will have outlived all creation, and be the final individual to awaken the distant echoes of the icy rocks, without kith or kin, a sort of Adam at the wrong end of creation, whose sun had for ever set in frost—the only man who could have no fear of moth nor rust, area sneaks nor highway robbers, larrikins nor cockroaches, mosquitoes, mad dogs, nor poisonberries, tormenting flies on a bald head, nor lazarettos, bawling women nor bad brandy, insurance agents, broadcloth nor white ties. What a soul-chilling paradise! A Garden of Eden without a sweet Eve, a sour apple, or even a law to be broken. Do what he would, no one could say him nay. He cared for nobody and nobody cared for him. The last man of millions, and with whom died out a cantankerous, quarrelsome, vain, contemptible, presumptuous, earth-tied race, whose existence in the universe was an uncalled-for problem, and who would never be missed from it; a race of rage and discontent; a race which had spent thousands and thousands of years un-

happily, and in more or less misery and suffering; a race whose pleasures and delights, if totted together, might possibly extend to a year or two.

In his leisure, the last man of this family conjectured and cogitated, cavilled and cursed, in a vain endeavour to learn why the race which he sees ends with him, ever had any existence at all. He will never watch the bones of the last man but one whiten in the air, for they will long survive this demise, all warmth and bacteria being extinct. His own bones will be preserved for ages.

The last man, I see in my imagery, will be small, hairy, awkward-shaped, disgusting in his habits, addicted to the fag end of human vices, and think of little else but how to fill his stomach without work or a parliamentary billet. His learning being purely rudimentary, he will be unconscious of the phases the earth has passed through. He will not long for the good old times of his ancestors with their buns and tobacco. If he speak he will address a large assembly of icebergs, without hearing an approving word to flatter his vanity. What a field of speculation opens as to what the last man's last word will be! The final vocal sound of the human race. Will it be the bray of an ass, the croak of a croaking man, the ejaculation of relief as he discards his own corpse, the groan of pain, the exclamation of joy of a man who was in undisputed possession of the whole world? Torren's tittle to the estate. No danger of jumpers

seizing his claim. Such an earthly king never before existed as the last man will be. Alexander Selkirk was but an atom to him! He, the mighty potentate of terrestrial dominion, can never be deposed! This planet of ours, twisting, twirling, and whirling through space with one solitary human being on it, and he unable to jump off. A little dumpty fellow, all by himself on our earth. Curious, isn't it?

His obsequies will be untrammelled by the obtrusive enquiries and distasteful attentions of his neighbours. No wake will be held at his funeral. He will miss the pleasant and soul-stirring episode of hearing the hearse-door slam upon him when the horses move off to his grave. When the skeleton scythe-man, at the instigation of King Frost, cuts through his bandy legs with a sweep, the race of man will be as extinct as the dodo is now.

The last man will probably glory in possessing a name. Not a double-barrelled, hyphenated, almost unpronounceable cognomen, intended by sheer length and bombastic utterance to arrest attention and give dignity to him who lacks dignity in himself, but a plain, honest, straightforward name, unencumbered by sham or pretence. Such a name I see glowing before me as the name of the last man. It is as unpretentious and true a name as that of the first man who was created. It is Mada. Pronounced after the dye plant, but otherwise having little to do with dying. The etymology of the word is not

difficult to trace. As the first man was called Adam, so the last man—dancing diametrically at the other end of degenerate creation—must be Mada : this is Adam spelt backwards.

Such then is the use of prophecy.

Being in possession of a name, and a last man, and certain definite conditions in which he must live, the Herculean task of subscribing his biography has been accomplished.

I admit the inconsistency of writing a biography before a person's birth. But as all biographies are written to be of some service to mankind, this biography would have failed in its mission had it not been written before the advent of the last man.

After the last man has shuffled off this mortal coil, the process of cooling down will still continue until the sun itself is frigid. This will occur in 10,000,000 years from now. Thus will the pomp and glory of our earth pass away at the bidding of King Frost ; thus will the brilliance, warmth and heat of the sun be annihilated, also at the bidding of King Frost !

THE SECRET SOCIETY.

CHAPTER I.

THE dvornik, or doorkeeper, who is usually a spy in the pay of the Third Section of Russian police, sat moodily at his post at the entrance of a fine brick mansion in the Nevski Prospekt, one of the chief streets in St. Petersburg.

The air was invigorating, the night sharp, clear and still ; the firmament shone with a dull brilliance.

A bearded artisan sauntered past the dvornik and as he did so, without turning to look either to the right or left, he said, " How many, Michael ? "

" Seventeen," replied the dvornik, without stirring an inch. The artisan had barely gone ten yards before a likhac, drawn by excellent horses, rapidly approached and drew up at the mansion.

The dvornik arose, stood at attention and saluted, as a well-dressed man alighted, passed him and ascended to the saloon of Madam Turoff, from whose rooms above streamed a blaze of light challenging as it were, the radiance reflected from the sky.

This visitor was a round-shouldered, narrow-chested man with a stoop. His neck was very thin.

His beard, almost black, was trimmed closely to his face; it was inadequate to conceal the pallor of his face. From his small steel-blue eyes he shot furtive glances in every direction as he wended his way upstairs. Evidently this was a man of suspicion, craft, and watchfulness. At the threshold of the salon he was received by his hostess.

She was a handsome brunette, verging on middle age; upright and extremely graceful. Her head was adorned by a profusion of almost black hair which admirably matched the dark flashing eyes beneath. As soon as she caught sight of her visitor her features underwent a rapid change. From frank, open good nature, they contracted to resolution and hostility.

The exchange of greeting between these two people was apparently cordial and expressed the delight always shown as a part of Russian hospitality.

"You will find me in the boudoir," said the gentleman under his breath; "come there as soon as you are able."

She answered by a glance of the eyes, which he perfectly understood.

The round-shouldered man passed into the salon, where he was received with the greatest deference and respect by the visitors. The *procureur*, for such was his high official status, returned the cordial greetings in as agreeable a way as he could. He, of all men, was considered specially dangerous to

needlessly offend, as, if report be true, he had been instrumental in sending to Siberia many a worthy person, for no other reason than that of a personal animosity and vindictive spite.

Monsieur Autonoff entered into the gaiety of the party as freely as such an evil disposition could do, chatting, even going so far as to sing a sentimental song, and at one moment actually to indulge in a somewhat prosy joke. Russian society has, in later generations, modelled itself to a certain extent upon French fashion; adopting, using, and imitating the practices of that light-hearted nation in the courtesies and amenities of civil life, rather than continuing a coarser vein of social custom of former times.

After about half an hour M. Autonoff, moving in an apparently objectless way, sought the retreat of the boudoir, and settling himself in an easy corner, became engrossed in scrutinising some portraits he picked up from an occasional table. Soon afterwards he was joined by his hostess, Madame Zuroff.

"You were not long coming, Madame Zuroff," said Autonoff. "I was afraid I should have to wait an atrociously long time for you."

"I came as soon as I conveniently could, M. Autonoff," replied his hostess; "though I confess I have no idea what you so much desire to say to me in private. You really weary me."

"That is soon explained, if you cannot guess it."

"No, I certainly cannot."

"It is your final answer to my humble petition, Sophia," said M. Autonoff.

"If you mean to renew your former odious persecutions, M. Autonoff, you can save yourself the trouble of doing so, and save me the annoyance of listening to them."

"You forget the constitution of Russian government, Madame, and you certainly ignore the status of a *procureur* in the Capital."

"I neither forget the one nor the other, M. Autonoff, neither do I forget that a *procureur* should always be a gentleman and behave as such."

"Enough of such talk," said Autonoff, as he shot a vicious glance at her; "I intend to offer you, once and for all, this final chance."

"I reject it," said Madame Zuroff; with flashing scorn.

"Beware what you say. Recollect, M. Zuroff is your husband, Madame, and the times are uncertain."

"I do recollect that," replied his hostess, with some slight shiver; as he reminded her that hatred in Russia involved injury to those dear to one as well as to oneself, if the hatred came from an official.

"Your answer, then."

"Why do you pester me with these dishonourable and detestable advances?"

"Your answer."

"You have my answer already, now and for ever, M. Autonoff."

"Your previous refusals I consider as nought. This is the last opportunity I offer you, Sophia. Consent, and you are safe beneath the highest protection in the realm. Reject them, and as surely as our father rules, will I strike a terrible blow."

Madame Zuroff became rigid and drew one deep sigh.

"Your answer!" he repeated in fierce intensity.

"NEVER!" hissed Madame Zuroff between her clenched teeth, as fairly roused, she trembled with intense passion and fear. "Rather would I sink beneath the waters of the Neva, you despicable wretch, than listen to your vile proposals!"

"Beware how you thwart me," said M. Autonoff; rising in excitement as he spoke and trying to catch hold of her arm.

Madame Zuroff drew quickly out of reach and flashed a deadly glance of hatred upon him; a glance of withering scorn. "Come one step nearer, M. Autonoff, and I strike your foul face and call the whole company to witness it."

"Enough," replied Autonoff, as he turned on his heel towards the salon, his face livid in colour, and his head bent lower on his narrow, mean chest. "On your own head be it, then. Let us see who will conquer. I will crush you to the gutter."

Madame Zuroff sank on the seat he had just quitted, overcome with terror and dismay. Beads of cold perspiration stood out on her forehead, and despair seized upon her heart.

Autonoff, with murder brewing in his heart and hatred ripening in his breast, sauntered back to the other guests and acted, as far as control over his passion would permit, as if nought had occurred to disturb the equanimity of his mind. Soon after, he retired from the salon unobserved by the others. He hurried down the staircase towards the street. The darkness of night had increased.

As he reached the dvornik, who once more rose and saluted, he paused to strike a match to light his cigar. The dvornik remained motionless.

"Is it placed there, Michael?" whispered Autonoff, so that the spy could hear him.

"It is, Monsieur Procureur;" returned Michael.

"Should you fail, Michael, you know the penalty. Seven kopecks a day for rations."

"I know, Monsieur Procureur;" whispered Michael in trepidation.

"Then let none leave," said Autonoff, as he put the match to his cigar and continued his walk to the roadway.

The bearded artisan who had previously spoken to the doorkeeper moved diagonally across the roadway to the *procureur*.

"How many?" said Autonoff to him.

"Twenty-one, all told," replied the bearded artisan.

"Then let none leave on any pretext," said Autonoff.

"Very well, Monsieur Procureur."

"Recollect that if one be short, you will make up the number."

"None will be short, Monsieur Procureur ;" replied the bearded artisan.

"Those marks you still bear on the wrists shall be cut to the bone. Curse you, dirty dog, if one escape!" said Autonoff. "I warn you, no excuse will save you this time. The heaviest chains and the deepest mine, you tricky hound."

The bearded artisan made no verbal reply, but his eyes blazed with hate and a longing for revenge.

The *procureur* passed on his way to the likhac in which he had made his visit. He stepped within without uttering a word, and the likhac was rapidly driven away.

"Twenty-one," he muttered to himself, "is a great haul. Twenty-one, two of whom at least have prohibited documents on them, will place me in a rosier light in certain quarters. Two caught red-handed at a meeting of twenty-one, ostensibly for pleasure, but really to disseminate revolutionary intelligence. One with a free press publication, the other with a letter notifying a meeting of rebels." And Autonoff leaned back against the cushions in a much more comfortable frame of mind and chuckled to himself in high glee. "None will be more astonished than those irretrievably implicated."

CHAPTER II.

THE guests of Madame and Monsieur Zuroff continued their conversation, their laughter, their songs and their frivolities. Madame Zuroff, of all those assembled there, was heart-broken and almost incapable of movement. A load of anxiety bore her down.

Russia is a country where all power is centred in autocracy. Justice is a name which has a true ring in many commercial and social disputes and disagreements. But justice does not exist if it be to the hurt or detriment of autocracy in its wayward will. There is no justice then. The people are nought when they think to oppose autocracy. The Tzar and his officials are omnipotent. Hence abuses of all forms are perpetrated by officials with impunity upon those beneath them in official circles or society. There is but little possibility or probability of redress. No parliament exists in which to ventilate grievances or outrages. The Press is under censorship and dare not hint at the presence of irregular conduct in autocratic circles. Free speech in politics is unknown. Literature of socialistic, or communistic, or republican character, is never allowed to enter the empire. The discussion of political economy in other form than the support of autocracy, is felony. Western Europe has gradually, however, spread her feeble breath of freedom over the shakos of the

custom house officers and over the helmets of the *gendarmes* on the border, and actually infected some of the Russians themselves!! The educated classes have imbibed a dangerous dose of thoughts of freedom, liberty and justice, to all men. They even are awakening to the idea that it is no crime to think, to speak, to write, to listen to expositions concerning social and monarchical government in other forms than that of Russia.

All Russian students are tainted with this liberalism. Hence, when an upheaval against autocracy occurs in educational quarters, the first measure of repression consists in closing the universities. Disbanding those men who have been taught logic, prohibiting them for life from ever returning to the fount that showed them men were not quite as free as wild dogs, or yet enjoyed the liberty of a wild hog. Dissatisfaction is general in the empire of the Tzar, but it lacks means to express itself in a suitable form. The safety-valve of Western Europe is freedom to publicly expose that which is believed to be wrong—to submit it to the general consensus of public opinion. In Russia all such publicity is repressed. In Russia a free press is a secret press, which manages to print off a few copies of an issue at irregular intervals. Even as I pen these words a cablegram says that 500 persons have just been arrested in Russian Poland because the Government has dis-

covered a free press in that province. Such an act is impossible, except under an absolute monarchy where bureaucracy is polluted and omnipotent. All classes of Russian life now furnish recruits to Nihilism and revolutionary doctrines. All classes contain enormous numbers of silent sympathisers with the revolutionaries. If reforms were not an urgent necessity, this feeling could not exist. Autocracy hopes by increased severity to stem the torrent. What a hopeless hope! What would a Londoner say if sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment for simply lending a friend a book declared to be prohibited by the Government censor? Such harshness defeats its own ends by driving the gentle and kindly disposed to thoughts of vengeance, of revolt, of undying hatred. The merest suspicion leads to arrest. What a farce, too, becomes the vaunted trial by jury when an arrested person need never be sent before a court, for the Chief of the Third Section of Detective Police has the power, on his own personal and irresponsible order, to banish for life to any part of Siberia, any subject of the Tzar he may wish to be deported, without the slightest formality of inquiry. His order is amply sufficient. There is no appeal. There is no publicity. Any Russian subject making the matter public by way of protest would instantly be classed as a suspected person. A discontent.

People of other nations, where some fair amount of freedom exists, cannot realise the power of autocracy in Russia. They have no idea of it. They think were such things true, that the people would rise in revolt. Such a course of insurrection is impracticable when all the towns put together have only one-tenth of the entire population of the Empire. The enormous distance the towns are apart render such a scheme impracticable. Besides this, towns are now under such rigorous supervision as to be almost military camps — almost under martial law.

The Revolutionists, therefore, have some reason on their side when they assert they have no other means of obtaining redress of existing evils other than that of terrorising the autocracy.

The threat of Procureur Autonoff was consequently no idle boast. It was possible, and exceedingly easy, for any one in his position to wreck a whole family by a few words of condemnation.

Madame Zuroff, crushed and dejected, still kept apart from her guests. The stillness of night in the Nevski Prospekt was roughly broken by the command of a gruff voice, which penetrated the salon above, crying out:—

“Halt! Two files quick march.” The tramp of feet in military precision responded to the word of command. They steadily ascended to the salon of Madame Zuroff.

Consternation was depicted on every countenance. The music ceased, the laughter stopped, and every pulse throbbed with an unknown fear. What did it mean? The merriment of a moment before changed to fright and terror.

Everyone rose to his feet. Men glanced at the open window, as if meditating flight therefrom. Ladies, who a few minutes before, were the embodiment of gaiety and abandonment, now clutched the arms of men in affright. Wives clung to husbands, daughters to fathers, sisters to brothers.

Madame Zuroff, previously feeble and prostrate, became galvanised into activity and flew to her husband's side.

"Demetrius," she cried, as she clung to him. "This is the work of the infamous *procureur*! Oh my Demetrius, will you forgive me? I have angered him, nought else."

"Sophia, my beautiful wife," replied Demetrius Zuroff; "it cannot be for me. I am legal, I am clear. Be brave, Sophia. 'Tis some mistake."

"*I know*," she rejoined, "we never have done aught against the authorities or the Tzar."

"Why, then, this dread, Sophia?" asked Demetrius Zuroff. "What do you fear, my wife?"

"Oh, Demetrius, he will do anything. He is capable of deadly villainy. My beloved husband, let us die together rather than be parted. Together we have lived and struggled and fought the world

aye, and been happy! let us leave it together, let us die by a bullet from the same revolver. Quick, they come; give me your revolver, Demetrius."

"Sophia, I have none with me;" replied Demetrius, as he hung his head and clasped his beautiful wife to his breast.

"Oh, Heavenly Father! that such should be allowed outside Hell;" wept Madame Zuroff, as she clung closely to her husband and sobbed as if her heart were broken.

Four sturdy police officers, under command of a subaltern, entered the salon.

"You are my prisoners," said the subaltern in stern accents. "Resistance is useless. Escape is hopeless. The mansion is surrounded. My men are here in numbers."

"On whose order is this arrest made?" demanded Zuroff, pulling himself up with grand dignity, his wife still clinging to his breast and sobbing convulsively.

"The order of Procureur Autonoff," replied the subaltern.

"*The Procureur!*" exclaimed the astonished guests. "He was here but a few minutes ago. 'Tis a mistake, 'tis incredible."

"The order is signed by Procureur Autonoff;" replied the subaltern. "My instructions compel me, Monsieur Demetrius Zuroff, to search you for concealed papers in the presence of these witnesses, who are my prisoners."

"Me!" exclaimed Zuroff, starting back with indignation blazing from every feature. "Sir, you forget I am the friend of the *procureur*, and such an indignity offered to me will require explanation in another quarter."

"Monsieur Zuroff," returned the subaltern; "it is not my wish to offer you any indignity or affront. My orders are imperative, I beg you will read them yourself, so as to be satisfied I do not exceed my instructions." With this he handed to Monsieur Zuroff the warrant for his action.

Demetrius Zuroff looked at it in dismay, then turning to the subaltern he said, "Sir, I am at your service."

The ladies forcibly but gently dragged Madame Zuroff from her husband who, as she left him imprinted a kiss upon her brow. She, arms extended and terror in her face, was slowly borne to a settee. M. Zuroff stood still as a Stoic.

At a signal made by a movement of the arm two police officers advanced to M. Zuroff, the other two officers closing together in front of the door. The subaltern looked on awaiting the result.

The police officers drew from the pocket of M. Zuroff a copy of a paper called *The Will of the People*, a prohibited print issued by the secret press.

Demetrius Zuroff gave one look at the title of the paper, turned a piteous look upwards, then crushed his hands heavily down on his head in utter despair.

He could not utter a sound. Only one sob escaped him. The possession of such a print was a sentence of banishment to Siberia for life.

"Monsieur Zuroff," said the subaltern in measured tones, "I do not think you will deny the possession of a copy of a Terrorist publication.

"I cannot deny it," slowly said Zuroff. "I never knew 'twas there. I know nought of its contents. I have never seen it before they drew it from my pocket. I have never put it in my pocket. I have never touched it, even, now. It has been placed there by other hands than mine."

The subaltern bowed.

Madame Zuroff, too much astounded to utter a sound, gazed for a few moments, then fainted and knew no more. God was more merciful to her than the Tzar was.

The subaltern drew a whistle from his pocket, stepped to the open window, blew a shrill pipe upon it and returned to his former place in the salon.

Instantly the tramp of feet of more drilled men resounded in response, as they marched along the flagged courtway. More police officers slowly and steadily ascended the stairs. The salon was filled by uniformed and armed men of the Third Section.

The prisoners, in safe custody, were conducted down the stairs singly to the street below and then removed to—WHERE !!!

CHAPTER III.

BUILT on an island formerly known as Jaini-Saari, at St. Petersburg, where the waters of the River Neva wash completely round it, is an immense mass of masonry called the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. A fortress whose name is familiar wherever the English tongue is spoken. A name which conjures up in the breast of every Russian subject a superstitious dread whenever it is mentioned.

The fortress, of leaden grey hue, covers an oblong area of about 300 acres. The axis of greater length shoots east and west. Lapping the foundations of the walls of the southern front flows the bulk of clear deep waters of the River Neva.

The fortress has six bastions. They are pentagonal masses of masonry of terrific strength, built at the angles of the walls. Between bastion and bastion run two parallel walls. That on the outer side is about twenty feet high. The walls are separated by a courtway space of from fifteen to twenty feet. If the outer wall be battered down and taken, the defenders have still the inner wall for protection and defence. The walls and intervening space are called a courtine. The fortress has six courtines.

In the centre of some of the bastions a second or inner bastion of pentagonal shape is constructed, with walls of masonry five feet thick. These are

termed the reduts. If the bastion be levelled by artillery, there still stands the formidable reduct to repel further assault.

As the courtines are the weakest parts of the fortress, they are covered at a distance of about one hundred yards in front by a triangular fortification called a ravelin. It is a gigantic breastwork of masonry forming a triangular separate fort.

Two of these ravelins exist outside the body proper of the enclosed fortress. One faces towards the rising sun and the other towards the setting sun. They shield the courtines.

Facing the main current of the River Neva on the south front of this historical fortress, tower three of its bastions. That at the south-west angle is Bastion Trubetskoi. The reduct of this bastion has walls five feet in thickness. The only light which can penetrate the prisoners' cells in the reduct is that which is reflected from the inner aspect of the bastion walls. This reflected light has to pass through the narrow perforation in the wall of the reduct, filter through a double frame with small apertures and an iron grating and then find its freedom in the cell within. Any prisoner in these cells is in semi-darkness. Yet this is not sufficient for the authorities. If prisoners cannot see, still they might be able to hear through five feet of masonry. What shall be done? asks the demon of fierce hatred living in autocracy. Cover the walls

and floors with painted felt to deaden every sound, comes the response! So they do it, and five inches from the felt on the cell walls they fasten strong iron nettings covered with coarse linen and paper, then with yellow painted paper. That will kill communication by taps or knocks, chuckles the demon! Thus is a prisoner unable to give evidence of his whereabouts. No sound enters and no sound can pass out. It is more silent than the tomb. A silence that is awful!

Yet Bastion Trubetskoi, which is chiefly reserved for political prisoners in the fortress of Peter and Paul, is deemed a heaven when compared with some others in the Russian Empire.

The commandant of the fortress is the only person who knows all those who are prisoners within its walls.

Men pass within its gates, which close behind them and they are never heard of again. Some are prohibited from communicating with those outside. Some are entombed in such cells as described above, in complete silence year after year till death mercifully claims them for his own. Others are secretly deported from its dungeons to the wilds of vast Siberia. Some remain, pending a trial before a judge and jury. Others are spared the mockery of a trial before a judge who has already been instructed what sentence to pass on the accused. Years of detention may and generally do elapse, before a prisoner is brought to trial. The detention may be unlimited.

Enquiry, if conducted at all, can be made in camera and sentence be pronounced in camera. On the simple order of the administration, that is the police, the prisoner need not be placed on trial, but may be exiled to Siberia for life. Unknown to others in the fortress, unknown to those without, a prisoner may be removed into the Arctic Zone of Northern Siberia, three or four thousand miles North of St. Petersburg. On the simple denunciation of a spy, arrest is effected and incarceration in the fortress follows. Every year, thousands are transported to Siberia solely on the order of the Chief of the Third Section. Five thousand people are annually transported as vagrants. To walk beyond one's own village without possessing a passport, is vagrancy, and is punished as vagrancy.

Whilst waiting trial in the fortress a prisoner is prohibited from engaging in any work. He is hidden from sight or converse with any one except the soldier who brings in his food. The sentinel is prohibited from replying to any question put to him. Nothing more horrible as a punishment can be imagined. The solitary cell is the invention of the brain of the human devil. Whether the solitary confinement be in the dungeons of Peter and Paul or in the milder form of the solitary cell of an English gaol, it still remains the apotheosis of human ingenuity in torture.

The infamous cellular system of the Russian

Empire comprises these punishments:—No exercise except to walk up and down the cell itself. No fresh air except that through the aperture high up towards the ceiling in a wall five feet thick. No daylight except that which trickles through this aperture. No occupation, no writing materials. No sound of any human voice except the prisoner's own. Perpetual silence, perpetual idleness. No impression of outside life to keep the mind healthy. Only the impressions of one's own brain to think of. Absolute seclusion from all human beings. These punishments mean the cruellest form of slow murder and cause the mind to rot in a suffering body.

It seems hardly creditable that human beings could sanction such brutal treatment of their fellow-men. The Russian Government, however, is not averse to it. One hundred and ninety-three revolutionists were arrested in one *coup*. They were thrown into the fortress. Their trial extended over a period of four years, which means that *four years* had elapsed since the last one was *brought up* for trial. Some were fortunate enough to be tried *one or two years after* they had been *arrested*. The effect of the rigorous treatment is illustrated by the sequel. Of the one hundred and ninety-three, no less than seventy-five went mad, committed suicide, or died ere the four years had elapsed. *God save the Tzar.*

The whole civilised world shakes with a throb of

pious horror and exasperation, when one man, a Tzar, having lived in the greatest luxury, affluence and power all his life, is suddenly cast into eternity by the explosion of a bomb. How indignant were they, in their pious horror, when an explosion took place in the Winter Palace in 1880. What execrations from the most pious of women and priests rose to heaven to rebound with the force of a thunderbolt of Jove upon the authors of the outrage.

Did the whole civilised world shake and express its horror and disgust when *each one* of these seventy-five prisoners—*some* of whom certainly were quite *innocent* of evil—was slowly done to death in silence and solitude in *dark dungeons* of Bastion Trubetskoi during incarceration therein, year after year, without ever hearing the *sound of a human voice*, or being touched by a *single ray of sunshine*?

No! The pious *women and priests* crossed themselves and cheerfully sang the national anthem, *God save the Tzar!* They were not incarcerated in Bastion Trubetskoi.

What sensible men, then, can wonder or be surprised to learn that every class of Russian society furnishes champion after champion, who dashes himself against this hydra-headed monster and perishes in the contest. These champions of reform are culled from the highest scions of hereditary nobility and from the humble serfs of the village Ispravnik. Tired of peaceful futile efforts, they have no option but recourse to violence.

One hundredth part of the injustice sanctioned by the autocratic systems was enough to make Cromwell Dictator of England. Enough to behead Charles I.

One hundredth part of such misrule led to the establishment of the French Republic. To the guillotining of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.

A ten thousandth part gave the banner of the stars and stripes to the United States of America and lost England the fealty of America.

CHAPTER IV.

IN a silent cell in reduct of Bastion Trubetskoi, sat a man with blood-shot eyes, weary and alone dejected and sad.

Every fifteen minutes the bells of the fortress clock broke the silence. Each hour they chimed a canticle. Every twelve hours they played "God save the Tzar." As water dripping on a stone will gradually perforate it, so the perpetual repetition of these sounds upon the nerves of a man who never hears aught else must be *maddening*.

The only noise penetrating to the darkness and deathly silence of his cell was the constant repetition of the same monotonous combination of sound waves. Of the multiple horrors of his position probably this equalled any other he had to endure.

The prisoner rose from his seat and paced his cell diagonally, five paces one way and five paces back again.

"It makes the distance longer, going from corner to corner," said he; "and it may make my imprisonment seem shorter. Backwards and forwards, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, and no human voice to speak to me. No hand of love or friendship to be held out to me. No sound has broken my silence for two years save the cursed bells with their *same, same, chime*. My heart almost bursts to think of you, my wife. What must your misery be, too, knowing that I am lodged here or in a similar abode. I might bear it better if, for one moment, I might catch a glimpse of the city or the life beyond these cursed walls. To break the monotony would I gladly consent to see stone after stone of this reduct crash slowly into my cell until it was filled and my bones were crushed to atoms beneath them. That were better than this terrible oblivion of all else in the world. I may not even work. For two years have I lived in solitude in these stone walls, whilst outside them pulsates the ardent, nervous throbbings of a mighty city—a city I shall never behold again." He sat down and wept.

The bolts of the door shot back and the key turned in the lock. The door swung open. A fully armed soldier stepped in, put down four ounces of

black rye bread on the table together with a wooden bowl of washy soup. As it touched the deal board :—

“Tell me what day of the week it is,” said the prisoner starting up in eager anxiety and extending his hands.

The soldier turned round to go without answering.

“*Tell me*—for God’s sake, unless you wish to see me a madman—*the day of the week!* Speak, anything. Even one word! one curse! That is all! Break the silence of two years! Let me hear the sound of a human voice!” The soldier had reached the door, he stepped outside and closed it, the key turned, two bolts shot softly back into their sockets as the bells of the fortress clock chimed forth “*God save the Tzar.*”

The innocent prisoner was Demetrius Zuroff.

CHAPTER V.

“WHEN do we start?” said Drigo to a bearded man, haggard and worn, as he struggled to his feet in the foul stifling atmosphere of the Etape some hundred miles the other side of Tomsk.

“At once,” replied Demetrius Zuroff, as he rattled the loose chain attached to his girdle, and fastening hands and feet together.

“Then give me that piece of old cloth to tie

under my ankle rivet," said Drigo. "The flesh is cut by friction, and I cannot bear the pain."

"'Twill poison it," replied Demetrius, as he stooped to the foul filthy floor of their prison house—a floor an inch thick in dirt matted together with damp, which constitutes the bed and bedding of five-hundred convicts sentenced to journey still farther north into frozen Siberia. He picked up the dirty reeking cloth, sodden and foul from contact with the floor, and handed it to his companion.

"Poison or not, I must pad it," returned Drigo, as he proceeded to protect the ulcerated ankle from the iron.

The door of the Etape was thrown open, and the military guard drew back before the gust of warm human exhalation that shot out in a puff towards them. The weary horde within silently rose to their feet and filed out into the fresh air and finally congregated on the highway beyond the stockade.

Looking across country from the highway nothing could be seen but stunted trees and dwarf shrubs sparsely scattered over the half frozen marshes of the plain, which stretched away almost as far as the eye could reach in every direction. Far on the horizon the scene was broken by a low mountainous ridge, whose slopes were clothed with dense masses of forest pines so characteristic of Siberia. Save this distant break nothing but desolation met the eye.

Along this highway had passed thousands of springless carts, crunching into softer parts and jolting over the harder parts, where trees and timber had been thrown down to mend the road and make it up again.

So little different, however, from the surrounding morass is the road, that were it not for the poles ranged along it to indicate its whereabouts, it would be easy to diverge into the dreary desolation of the steppe around and be lost.

The officer of the convoy emerged from his apartment and gave orders directing the party to form up in column.

"How far is it to the next Etape?" asked Drigo.

"Sixteen or eighteen miles, I know not which," said his companion; "and I care not. Yakutsk is two thousand eight hundred miles nearer to the North Pole than we are here, and it will take us fifteen months to accomplish the journey on foot."

"Fifteen months, then, before we are free from the company of the common law prisoners."

"Aye, Drigo," said Demetrius Zuroff; "at Yakutsk three hundred of them leave us. We two hundred—that is as many of us as are alive—will continue for fifteen hundred miles more until we pierce the zone of the Arctic circle itself."

Drigo groaned. "My ankle," said he, "will be cut through. Pity 'twere not my throat. Why don't they make Yakutsk our destination, as it was for-

merly for politicals and those sent under order of the Administration?"

"'Tis too near the palace at St. Petersburg, now they have other means of transport, than walking the first two thousand miles to Tomsk. Now we have to walk fifteen hundred miles more beyond Yakutsk to be sufficiently far enough off for the peace of mind of our father the Tzar.

"Silence!" shouted the officer. Presently he gave the order to march, and the convoy and party slowly began the day's journey.

First went a squad of soldiers; then, with half-shaved heads, and wearing grey clothes, with a yellow diamond in the centre of the back, went the chained convicts sentenced to hard labour. Following those, the political exiles in grey clothes and open shoes. Next a few springless baggage carts; then, most pathetic sight of all, followed the wives and children of exiles, who had voluntarily undertaken to follow into captivity those whom they loved so dearly,—women undertaking all the hardships of a foot journey extending over years in a desolate country, in order to be near their husbands, brothers, or fathers. Ill-clad, becoming poorer and poorer as the journey lengthened, their clothes worn to shreds, their feet cut and bleeding, and the flesh of the body exposed in parts to the cutting blasts of the wintry air of the Arctic regions, these heroic creatures braved all to be near those who were dear

to them; for the *paternal government* of the Tzar makes no provision for them, and they could not, even if they had it, carry much baggage with them. Bringing up the rear of the cavalcade marched another detachment of soldiers, who, with blows and oaths, beat on those who lingered by the way. Last of all travelled the car of the commanding officer.

Late in the afternoon the party arrived at another stockade, enclosing the log - built prison where the night has to be passed. Every third day the convoy and party rest in the Etape for one day.

"Hurry, Demetrius, hurry," said Drigo; "'less you would sleep beneath the platform in the foul mire. Others will have covered the platforms, and our clothes 'ill keep down the filth and damp. Curse this ankle." And Drigo savagely shook his wrist chains. "I cannot hasten because of it. I shall be last."

"What matters," replied Demetrius; "others are more worn and ill-clothed than we. Let them go in first."

"Think of the floor filth," said Drigo; "there is nought but our clothes to lie on, and we must perforce sleep naked in this pestilential den."

"I care not," said Demetrius in apathy, as other convicts hustled and crowded by the pair and entered the prison first.

"Be quick there," said a soldier to Drigo.

"My ankle is sore," replied Drigo.

"Liar!" returned the soldier, and he struck Drigo a blow in the side of the mouth. "Hurry now."

Drigo, bleeding and limping, struggled in through the door, which was then shut on this teeming, steaming, dirty mass of overcrowded humanity.

Almost before they could sit down on the floor loud words of complaint resounded above the general chatter.

"What is it now?" said Drigo, as he spat the blood from his mouth to the floor between his feet.

"The stove is out of order and will not be lighted," replied Demetrius; "and we are almost perishing with cold."

"It will light," said Drigo, "as soon as the warder of the Etape has been adequately bribed;" and he spat again on the floor.

"What else do you expect?" said Demetrius with passion; "when nearly any official will sacrifice the interests of the State and the happiness of the people to personal aggrandisement, caprice, or parsimony."

"Despotism polluted by bureaucratism," added Drigo. "Official peculation and venality all through."

"Here is one kopeck to help coax the pilfering warder to light the stove. I should freeze without the stove. The melted snow which drifted through this crevice in the logs has saturated my sleeping place."

The discussion, consultation and discontent still continued amongst the prisoners. Those having any means contributed a few kopecks towards a common fund to bribe the myrmidon of the Tzar to discharge his duty.

Eventually, under the stimulus of the highest bribe that could be wrung from these foot-weary, ill-clad exiles and convicts, whose food was principally black rye bread and buckwheat, the fierce visaged savage, clothed as a functionary of the mighty Russian autocrat, relaxed his opposition and arranged the stove so that it could be lighted.

Drigo removed his grey overcoat and folded it lengthways, and laid it down on the damp dirt, which each moment became softer from the water of the thawing snow. On this he stretched his aching limbs and arranged the chains so as to avoid pressure on his sore ankle.

By his side was a silent man whose body was emaciated almost to a skeleton.

"Art worse to-night, Stevenoff?" asked Drigo.

"The same," replied Stevenoff.

"Why not try and sleep, then?" enquired Drigo.

"My wife is no more."

"Ah! 'twas she then who halted the rear-guard on the way. May the kingdom of heaven be hers;" and Drigo, repeating the usual Russian phrase of sympathy, crossed himself in orthodox fashion.

"'Twas she," said Stevenoff.

"And thy little one. Where is he?"

"Gone too!"

"How so?" asked Drigo.

"Scurvy. Speak not of it, Drigo. I have not strength or fortitude to end it. Else would the rear-guard have halted once again to dig my grave."

"Bear up, comrade," said Drigo, with as much compassion as one sufferer in such misery could express for another. "It cannot be much longer with you now, Stevenoff. You are wasting. Wasting quickly."

"Not much longer now, but still too long for me. Both gone. All I hold dear gone, and *I* cannot go *too*. Killed. Seven kopecks, one penny three farthings a day for rations for convicts and nothing for those who voluntarily go with them into exile."

"Were you not a *ukrivateli*? One who gave shelter to a suspect or revolutionary? That would condemn you before the *gendarmes*, Stevenoff."

"*No!!* A socialist, one Kornloff, on his way to Kupustok, stayed the night at my humble village, Kabak. The peasants heard Kornloff was in the village. They came. Kornloff made a speech in the room. All drink and go home. Three days after the Ispravnik heard. He came. Kornloff was not there. He had left the village. Could not be found. The Ispravnik denounced me as a suspect. My rye was ripe and waiting for the sickle. My cellar was full. I was arrested. Sentence was

fixed for five years and *loss of civil rights before* I was brought before the court. *The Ispravnik told me so*, I no longer exist in the eyes of the law, I have *no civil rights*, I am no longer *a man*, I am *a nothing*; *a nothing* cannot own rye or buckwheat. *A nothing* cannot hold wine. My property all confiscated. My wife and child gone. *I am a nothing.*" And he cried.

"Do not give way so much," said Drigo; "try and cheer up. If you could pick up again, you would in time belong to the Poselentsy and live in a certain prescribed district of Siberia, when you had served your sentence; or you might be able to get back to Russia."

"You ought to know hard labour convicts *never have the right* to return again to Russia," said Stevenoff. "But what matters it, Drigo. It does not concern *me*."

"In a month the bugle will ring out a sound over the desolation of the track, and the rear-guard will halt once more. I, Stevenoff, *a nothing*—will demand it. I will give that one word of command to the rear-guard—— HALT!

"They will obey me, *a nothing*, for once—aye—for once. When they raise the mound over me to keep off the wolves.

"Then I, Stevenoff, *a nothing*, will have escaped the guard—escaped the soldiers' bullets—escaped the third section—escaped the Tzar and joined—
MY WIFE AND CHILD."

CHAPTER VI.

It was Marteau who dashed up in his stylish dog-cart through King Henry the Eighth's Gate at the Hospital into the square and almost on to the fountain itself. Marteau, who would probably have dashed up to the cannon's mouth and as the gunner pulled the lanyard, ducked his head and laughed as the shot flew over it. In the same way Marteau would drive his high stepping gelding right up to the flower beds, and just as one expected to see the fore-foot descend into the mould, Marteau would suddenly wheel him round and draw up on the gravel drive in front of the west wing just as if nothing had happened.

Marteau's grandparents were French refugees, who fled to England at the time of the great Revolution. Marteau's father was reared on English soil in the Parisian style. He married a Frenchwoman. Our Marteau, the student, their only child, inherited a sufficient patrimony which was bequeathed as the remainder of the estate that was handed back to his grandfather at the restoration of the French Empire. Marteau's father was born at the time of great national unrest incidental to Revolution, when every man was suspicious and distrustful of his neighbour and no man felt safe from arrest for a moment. Born in the midst of intense national nervous tension, and born of a

family which had lived through it all, it is only feasible to infer that Marteau's nervous system lacked some of the resistent stolidity and placidity it would have acquired in peaceful times. Unexposed to the influence of such unfortunate circumstances, Marteau might have developed into another character.

Not that hereditary instinct by itself can be held accountable for all the vagaries it is customary and even fashionable to attribute to it, but because nursed in congenial surroundings, hereditary instinct may have an appreciable influence. It is more than likely it did do so in Marteau's case.

Marteau, like a considerable proportion of men who enter the profession of medicine never persisted to complete his studies or qualify himself as a surgeon. Under the *alias* in which his identity is hidden, he became a social factor of moment in political history.

As he was known in the dashing dog-cart days, he was Marteau, the medical student.

On the occasion of which this chapter treats he dashed in his usual style into the hospital square, accompanied by Captain d'Everell, quondam officer of French Cuirassiers. Before the horse had stopped, the smart groom had sprung from his seat and was round at the horse's head.

Marteau coolly stepped down to the pavement and sought out Blundell, another student, with whom

he was on intimate terms. This worthy pair, un-mindful of comparative anatomy, embryology, or the ultimate fate of visceral arches and slits in the frog, fowl, and rabbit, returned to the dog-cart, mounted to their seats like princes of blood royal and were ready to depart.

"By Jingo," said Marteau; "here comes Sir Winking Footit with that clean pair of bays he gave £350 for, and the new Victoria, price £150. Look at me dash this gelding almost in to him, as if I could not help it, and nearly take his wheel off."

Crack went the whip, the gelding reared on his hind-legs, then came down again and swerved round and almost dashed into the Victoria, although the worthy medical knight's coachman had drawn as closely as he could to the flower bed coping.

Sir Winking started, winced and shivered, for his nerves, from constant mental strain, were as sensitive as a clinical thermometer is to body temperature.

"Don't laugh, for heaven's sake," said Marteau; "that has nearly knocked the life out of him. I must trot round and apologise for the antics of my damned horse."

Round the square one way went Marteau, and round the square the other way went Sir Winking.

Marteau, having farther to travel, hurried up to catch Sir Winking, and nearly knocked over two wrinkled-up old women, who were hobbling across to the out-patient room at the opposite corner.

"A pair of old virgins who ought to know better than come to our hospital so early," said Marteau. "Would have served them deuced well right had Aristotle trotted over them with his steel-tipped shoes. If there's anything this gelding hates, it's old women posing as young 'uns."

Round went the dog-cart, and pulled up just in time to catch Sir Winking before he entered the block.

Marteau and Blundell both raised their hats to the physician, for though medical men have very little reverence for aught else, they have a profound reverence for brains. Hide it as much as they like, there is not a medical man worthy of any standing who has not a profound, a deep, and a lasting veneration for intellect. Hence all medical students admitting the superior knowledge of the physicians and surgeons whom they know, take off their hats to them as a mark of respect to ability.

Marteau dropped the reins and was on the ground in a moment.

"Sir Winking," said he, "I must offer you a humble apology for the capers of my horse just now. He was, I think, stung by a spring dragon fly, and that made him unmanageable."

"Very well," replied Sir Winking Footit; "he is certainly rather a dangerous animal to drive, for all of us. You gentlemen are most reckless, I must say, in your conduct."

"I trust, Sir Winking, my poor Aristotle has not caused you much annoyance."

"Aristotle!" said Sir Winking, compelled to smile through all his annoyance; "it looks as if when Esculapius drives Aristotle round the Hospital Square there is great danger to life and limb, instead of safety. All right, Marteau, never mind it."

Marteau raised his hat, the physician did likewise, and they parted.

"By Jingo," said Marteau, as he resumed his seat; "he was a little testy over it. It gave him a good shake up, I know. I really thought I had landed his wheel. Now let us be off."

Marteau caught up the ribbons like a professional whip, touched up his thoroughbred, drove splashing-dashing round the square again and out of King Henry the Eighth's Gate, through which he had recently entered. Turning to the left he wended his way to Holborn and Oxford Street, then on through Hammersmith, Gunnersbury, and Kew, to the "Star and Garter" at Richmond on the Thames.

At the "Star and Garter" were two ladies already waiting their arrival.

One, a beautiful fresh smelling brunette, verging on middle age, had dark flashing eyes, which would be mischievous to a great many men, married or single, it is quite immaterial. Her manner, style, and language stamped her as a foreigner accustomed

to affluent society. Across her symmetrical features was imprinted an expression of hidden sadness, which added a pathetic charm to a face of extreme beauty.

The other lady's attractions particularly centred in vivacity and witticism. She was younger, taller, and slighter. She was more alert than her friend, but not nearly so profound in thought or capable of the same degree of feeling.

"We hardly expected you so early, Monsieur Marteau," said the elder lady.

"Why not, Madame Zuroff? Have you ceased to consult a looking glass or glance in the placid waters of Father Thames flowing at your feet? We only had to call at the Hospital for my friend, Blundell, whom you were so anxious to meet, and then, heigh, presto! behold we are here, devoted to your service."

"The willing slaves of a lovely queen," added Captain d'Everell, with a laugh.

"Yes, it is very nice to laugh," said Madame Zuroff; "you gentlemen are all so gallant until we ask for more than the lip adoration. Then, as you say, heigh, presto! behold, you are gone."

"Such observations are inappropriate to us," said Marteau. "To prevent Captain d'Everell making the running, allow me to introduce my friend, Mr. Blundell, of Bart's. Madame Zuroff and Madame Serneille, Blundell, *mon ami*, two of the most charming of the sex, as you will learn to your cost—

ladies who are deeply interested in social problems, alleviation of the sufferings of the masses, and reformation of wicked people. Is it not so, madame?"

Blundell hereupon raised his hat and made that which, for an Englishman, was a very profound bow.

"Is Captain d'Everell included in those to be reformed?" asked Madame Serneille, with an arch look at the careless captain.

"Certainly," said Madame Zuroff. "He requires more reforming than any other gentleman I know of. But we are not to undertake the hopeless task, but to listen patiently to Monsieur Blundell, who will tell of the poor in England. He will instruct us much, I am sure. Madame Serneille already has heard of his sayings and admires him at the distance. Now she can approach closely and listen at the fount of knowledge."

"I never said anything like that, Sophia," said Madame Serneille. "You are carried away by a chance word and captured by a shadow. Of course I prefer to hear the account direct. Who wouldn't?"

"My dear madame," interposed Marteau, "if Mr. Blundell cannot tell you all the ins and outs of the life of the bourgeoisie in London, no man can. He is full of it. He is just the man for you."

"I can't claim to have so much knowledge," said Blundell; "but the little I have is at your disposal. It simply comes to this. On the one side is the history of waste and extravagance, and on the other

side the tale of want, poverty and distress. That sums it all up."

"Yes," interposed the Captain; "that is exactly the case. We had a magnificent exhibition of Mr. Blundell's axiom this morning, when M. Marteau, driving recklessly, nearly killed two old women. Marteau, the plutocrat, on one side and two hospital paupers on the other—two old women."

"How dreadful!" said Madame Zuroff, mildly reproachful.

"And that is not the worst of it," said Marteau; "now we are here, Captain d'Everell wishes to make the case worse by killing two young ones. To kill two old women would be bad enough, but nothing to a captain trying to kill two young ladies."

"Fie, Monsieur Marteau," said Madame Zuroff, as she flashed approval with her sparkling eyes on the speaker. "You are too quick."

"Mr. Blundell," said Madame Serneille, "is a born courtier to have used such a beautiful expression as he did."

"Captain d'Everell is also well versed in the somethings which he keeps to himself," laughed Madame Zuroff. "I have heard some grave intrigues in the upper circles that will not bear the light of the sun if report whispered to me the truth, *mon capitaine*. Confess it to us. We will not divulge the secrets, or make too much laugh of it. Just one little affair." And she turned her head in a most coquettish way towards him.

"You are too severe on a bachelor, madame," good-humouredly returned Captain d'Everell. "I admit I prefer to confine my attentions to the aristocracy. Any little escapade is far better undertaken with the mistress rather than the maid. It is not a mortal sin to be more partial to the cream of society than to the skim milk of it."

"That is severe on your peasants, Sophia, dear," said Madame Serneille. "He prefers the pretty face in silk and satin to the pretty face in sackcloth and ashes."

"Never mind. We keep our thoughts for the by-and-by," rejoined Madame Zuroff. "Let us adjourn to the lawn to listen to the discourse of Mr. Blundell. You can have two gentlemen for your escort, Madame Serneille."

Madame Serneille, keen and alert, nodded her head, as much as to say she would manage all that easily.

So down to the grassy lawn of the "Star and Garter" strolled the quintet, where, comfortably ensconced in pleasant lounges midst the genial warmth of spring-time, the five acquaintances entered into a discourse which was dear to the hearts of at least four of them. Captain d'Everell gave the initiative.

"How fare the down-trodden Russian peasants, madame?" began Captain d'Everell, puffing a full-flavoured Havana cigar and sipping the liqueur made by the monks of St. Benedict.

"I have not received true report of them for one

month," responded Madame Zuroff, in a tone of dejection.

"No harm if they never were heard of again," said the Captain. "Always dissatisfied, always wanting more than they have. Nothing pleases them."

"Do not say that, Captain; they are ground down beneath the heel of despotism and bureaucracy till all the soul is crushed from them."

"They do not feel it," returned the Captain.

"Not feel?—why not? are they not human?"

"They may be human in shape, but they never know aught else but bondage. You forget that, knowing nought else, they do not notice the pangs that others in a higher class would feel if reduced to their position."

"Then teach them freedom, Captain. Teach them to know something better," interposed Madame Serneille, tossing her head, as much as to say, "That is soon settled," and toying with a *porte-monnaie*.

"What! teach them to feel more acutely, my dear Madame Serneille? You would set me a dreadful task. Tut, tut! Let me smoke the pipe of peace and look upon the many-hued pleasures of the scene."

"Let them know the worth of freedom."

"It would be a very serious error," said Captain d'Everell. "All the feeling lies in the nerves of those who point out the state of the serfs, not in the serfs themselves. It is not in the dense skulls of the proletariat. That is where the mischief rises

When they are happy the educated meddler will not leave them alone, but will make them unhappy."

"But they long for freedom," said Madame Zuroff. "Like the canary in the cage, he sings a song to long-lost liberty—poor birdie!"

"It would be dangerous to concede it to them," said the Captain. "They could not appreciate it. What do you think, Marteau—present them with white elephants?"

"Freedom is very well, sometimes," said Marteau, "and bondage is not altogether unpleasant in other instances." And Marteau cast a meaning glance at Madame Zuroff.

"Oh Sophia, did you hear that?" said Madame Serneille; "he has already capitulated."

The attractive manner of Madame Zuroff had not been thrown away on Marteau, who was half inclined to wholly subjugate himself to the charm of her disposition.

Mr. Blundell, on terms of less intimacy, had paired off by seating himself beside Madame Serneille, and he waited to hear how the argument went before offering his own opinions.

Captain d'Everell, a monarchist to the backbone, who preferred to take the world as it is, was quite happy to be in opposition to the four, and supplied them with sufficient stimulation to keep up a vigorous defence.

"What they never possessed they will never miss.

The happiest man is he who is satisfied with his present lot;" and he looked at them with lofty complacency.

"Then Monsieur Marteau ought to be quite happy, if looks mean anything," said Madame Serneille.

Marteau, not in the least disconcerted at the exposure, laughed in his usual nonchalant way.

"You provide a pretty illustration of the educated meddler, Madame Serneille," said the Captain. "Monsieur Marteau was happy, you should have left him alone to feast himself on beauty. Instead of that you present the position to him in various lights, and poor Marteau longs for more and is unhappy. In the same way, leave the peasant to his pasture, the cook to prepare our luncheon, me to my Havana and a view of the river, and then we shall all be happy."

Madame Serneille opened her eyes as widely as possible as the Captain spoke, and looked at him as if she were shocked.

"Not so," said Madame Zuroff, thinking only of her peasants; "they should be raised to a higher level."

"What, raise Monsieur Marteau to a higher level?" asked Madame Serneille.

"I am already enjoying the higher happiness," said Marteau. "It's very nice—I occupy the seventh heaven. There are only eighteen more."

"Desist, Monsieur Marteau; it is too flagrant. Let

me speak of the peasant. They must be taught and elevated. I think only of my poor peasants."

"Dangerous, a most dangerous proceeding to all concerned," said the Captain; "until they are fit for your ideal freedom and power. Madness to entrust it to them otherwise. All history says so."

"I have watched the habitual poor," said Blundell, breaking into the conversation; "and it is extraordinary that they exhibit so much apathy. So I am opposed to you, Captain."

"Shows they are happy," said the Captain.

"They seem content with a low form of animal existence. Exhausted and broken down by hunger and vegetating in the most prosaic sphere, they remain the eternal serfs of the privileged classes. That is my view of their position," said Blundell.

"Ah," said Marteau, "the English have not the intelligence of the French; they do not realise the abyss in which they live. Otherwise, heigh, presto! *à la Place de la Concorde.*"

Madame Serneille thoroughly enjoyed Marteau's idea that every reform necessarily meant the use of the guillotine. Women often are extremists.

"They have crushed the heart," said Madame Zuroff; "what can people do without the heart?"

"I have to live on half a one," said Marteau. "Madame, you have the other half and your own."

"Did I have it *all* it was not much," said Madame Zuroff, with a sharp, brisk twist of her head.

"And not worth having," said Madame Serneille.

"My devotion to the sex is unappreciated," said Marteau. "'Twas always so."

"Your devotion should first be to your own sex, M. Marteau," said Madame Zuroff; "then the ladies give you the smile."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Madame Serneille tumultuously.

"Yes," said the Captain, "you can be in the good graces of madame if you fight for the bourgeoisie and free the serf from the yoke of the oppressor."

"Yes, yes," said Madame Zuroff; "lift up the burden of the afflicted."

"Let the wild beasts out of the 'Zoo' cages, I think you mean, madame," said the Captain, with his usual complacency.

"You think them all beasts," she replied.

"Madame, I agree with some of your views," said Marteau; "you intend to make the world better. Is it not so? I think I may have to succumb to your radicalism, if argument be as forcible as allegiance."

"Certainly, M. Marteau; why not be a convert to Radicalism?"

"Were I positive it would really benefit them," replied Marteau, "I might champion their cause."

"The prize and benefit of conversion is a smile from madame," said the Captain, in a sly tone. "The sacrifice is not much, the reward is very sweet, and the temptation exasperating."

"When M. Marteau sees with the proper glasses I have all the smiles for him."

"Mr. Blundell," said Madame Serneille, "don't you think we are in the way, with such bare-faced flirtation and open bribery? It perfectly staggers me."

"Perhaps so, but my seat is too comfortable to resign it. I have already gauged the possibilities of yonder summer-house, but they are no good. If any of the party be in the way it seems to me to be Mr. Marteau and his heart-holder. Unless they desist however, I fear we must move away and leave them to their fate."

"Captain d'Everell is the only person totally indifferent to it all," said Madame Serneille. "Frivolity has lost its charm for him."

"Madame Serneille," said Madame Zuroff, "must not talk of parting. The gentlemen are here to tell us of the poor Londoners. That is the object of the luncheon at Richmond. They must not disappoint us."

"And M. Marteau insists on defeating the object by a violent flirtation with you, Sophia."

"He has feeling for the serfs. Some latitude must be extended to him."

"More feeling for something nicer," said the Captain.

"And Mr. Blundell knows more about the poor than affections of the heart," said Marteau. "Pray, interest them with news of the ragged brigade, Blundell."

"The dangerous animals," said the Captain.

"No, no, not dangerous," said Madame Zuroff; "but down-trodden."

"Tell them, Blundell, the pay of a prince and the pay of a pauper. They are dying to hear it," said Marteau; "Madame Serneille in particular."

"Do," said Madame Zuroff; "tell all, and M. Marteau shall sit close and listen." Saying which, she drew her skirt close, and made room for Marteau to sit on the seat beside her.

"It is like slumming," said Madame Serneille.

"In the winter time, when snow is two feet thick on the roads, they have the cats' meat and the poor box to sleep in. Is it not so, Monsieur Blundell?" said Madame Zuroff.

"Excuse my correction, Madame Zuroff; not the poor box—they would be glad of such a retreat—the poor house," said Marteau.

"The poor house, then," said Madame Zuroff.

"What would be the use of inviting them to a palace?" said the Captain; "they would be very unhappy in such an abode. Might just as well present them with the pastime and pleasure of proving a theorem in Euclid."

"They are poor worms," said Marteau. "If their lot be so bad, why not have the courage to rebel; raise the barricades and the standard of liberty and sing the Marseillaise?"

"Good," said Madame Zuroff; "M. Marteau shall

teach them, and all the ladies love him. Even Madame Serneille and I hang round his neck."

"What price is paid your Empress?" asked Madame Serneille of Blundell.

"£365,000 a year for private use," replied Blundell; "and about £200,000 a year more for household expenses."

"Ah! M. Marteau, what I tell you. You have no heart to listen to the cry of the poor."

"And your Prince Imperial?" asked Madame Serneille.

"Over £100,000 a year for his establishment."

"And his shoemaker ten shillings the pair to sew the shoes," said Madame Zuroff.

"No doubt he pays for that," said Madame Serneille, "or his feet would ache."

"Bless my soul!" said the Captain; "look at the large family of princes and princesses that have to be kept on the money."

"They have special allowances from Parliament of about £20,000 a year each, besides little pickings I need not expose. The larger the royal family the more money is taken from the earnings of the taxpayer to keep them with."

"And when the baby prince arrives," said Madame Serneille, "the taxpayer is so proud and jubilant because he is permitted to pay for the support of somebody else's child."

"That is only loyalty," said the Captain.

"Keeping other men's brats?" asked Madame Serneille, with a most engaging smile at the Captain.

"They must be kept somehow," said the Captain.

"Twenty thousand pounds a year each young one!" said Madame Zuroff, holding her hands aloft in surprise. "What I tell you, Monsieur Marteau! And the peasant die on the road. Starve on the bones."

"Not exactly like that," said the Captain. "The peasant is provided for in a humble way."

"Yes," said Madame Zuroff; "I see it last week in the papers, a report. Found in one shed a man with nothing but rags on the body and die of the starvation."

"Don't, madame," said Marteau; "it is too shocking. You make me disloyal."

"You see now," said Madame Zuroff, bringing her beautiful face close to Marteau. "Tell us more, Monsieur Blundell. You are superb. Monsieur Marteau already sick. Let me feel the pulse. Come close, Monsieur Blundell and I pat the hand; then Monsieur Marteau know how the peasant suffer, by your description of their lives."

"Don't go away, Monsieur Blundell," said Madame Serneille. "You are quite as effective to them at a distance. If you want your hand patted I can manage to do it very gently and well. Give them another volley of stuff."

"Monsieur Blundell does not talk stuff," said

Madame Zuroff. "He tells all. Monsieur Marteau only thinks of the horse and his cart and the frivolity."

"*And you*," added Madame Serneille.

"He will dream of the eyebrows of the beautiful Sophia."

"You hardly do me justice," said Marteau. "As I am helpless to reform the abuses it only aggravates me."

"You can help us, Monsieur Marteau. It is just such as you we want—the kind—the brave."

"You flatter me," said Marteau.

"Tell more, Monsieur Blundell, till Monsieur Marteau thinks like we do."

"Anything you ladies wish," said Blundell, enjoying the discomfiture of Marteau and keeping watch on Madame Serneille, who assumed the most bewitching attitude she was capable of.

"Tell them, Monsieur Blundell, of the admirable provision made for the *canaille* in the poorhouses, where they are housed, fed, and clothed," said the Captain.

"And one man starve in the shed," said Madame Zuroff. "Yes, let us hear of that. Good!"

"That is explained by the man's unwillingness to accept relief," said the Captain.

"Any person who cannot obtain other work can have work given him and be paid for it at the Parish Workhouses," said Blundell.

"Then you say they cannot starve like some of my poor peasants," said Madame Zuroff.

"They can always get work and be paid for it, if they want the work," said Captain d'Everell.

"How much, Captain?" asked Madame Serneille.

"A thousand pounds a day," suggested Madame Zuroff.

"No," said Blundell; "tenpence a day or a maximum of four shillings and two pence a week for a single man to clothe and keep himself on in the depth of winter in London."

"What I tell you!" said Madame Zuroff, in great exultation.

"The married men have more, though," said the Captain.

"More children, you mean?" asked Madame Serneille, hiding a smile.

"Oh, yes," said Blundell; "the more children, the more money; the larger the family the greater the pay."

"That's what I mean," said the Captain.

"A man with a wife and, say, six children," continued Blundell, "is entitled to five days' work a week."

"I told you so," said the Captain.

"The other two days he is occupied washing the family," added Madame Serneille.

"Twenty thousand pounds a year for each baby?" asked Madame Zuroff.

"No, no," said Blundell; "even the wealth of England would never stand that."

"No?"

"The tax-payer sing a song and shout the cheer when the pauper have a new baby," said Madame Zuroff; "fire the artillery in St. James's Park and Captain d'Everell draw the sabre, present arms, and the troop couch the lance and charge the *sans culotte*. The tax-payer very glad so, when the pauper have another baby and the nation sing the *Te Deum Laudamus*."

Blundell and d'Everell roared at the withering satire. Marteau, although inclined to join them, looked somewhat melancholy and stern.

"When the royal baby is born," added Madame Serneille, "all the toys of the children of the *bourgeoisie* are taken away from them and sent on to the other baby to make up his yearly allowance. The baby bearing the brand royal takes all the toys. The other babies cry."

"You ladies carry me out of my depth in baby-land," said Captain d'Everell. "Monsieur Blundell, how much do you say they really pay them—I mean, of course, those who are absolutely destitute?"

"Well," replied Blundell, as he threw his arms back over the chair and looked at the ladies, "anything between the pay of tenpence per diem for a single man, such, for instance, as you and I are, Captain."

"Ha, ha," chuckled the Captain; "tenpence a day for me!"

"I don't include Marteau in the record for single men, as it might be incorrect shortly, if we may judge from appearances."

Madame Zuroff looked greatly pained, but said nothing, as the chance remark opened an old wound.

"From that up to fifteen pence, which is the maximum allowed for a man, his wife and family, no matter how many children there may be; for any number of children above two."

"For eight of them," asked Madame Serneille, "how much pay?"

"One shilling and threepence for the lot," replied Blundell.

"What I tell you, Monsieur Marteau!" said Madame Zuroff, as she turned in energy to that gentleman. "Do you know now of your London serfs? Ah, your Government has not the heart and the people have no eyes!"

"It isn't much for the poor beggars, I must admit," interposed the Captain. "Still, I suppose they manage to exist on it."

"Fifteen pence the day for a family, and only five days to each week! Three roubles twelve kopecks a week for food, clothes and domicile, when London boulevards are frozen and the coals burn at twenty shillings the ton!"

"But the butcher's meat is so cheap, my dear

Sophia, you forget that," said Madame Serneille. "I think Captain d'Everell can tell us the price of it."

"*Me! dear me, no; however should I know? I never buy meat. I can quote for Havaņas or Pomeroy now, but not for anything so vulgar as meat.*"

"Ah, then, Monsieur Blundell will tell us how cheap it is," said Madame Serneille, with a quiet smile.

"One shilling and fourpence a pound for rump steak, and one shilling and threepence a pound for mutton chops," said Blundell.

"Now," said Madame Zuroff, turning to Marteau with an expression of triumph on her countenance; "how can you sit by my side squeezing up very closely and think of the horse and his cart while the *bourgeoisie* starve? What I tell you of my peasants is true of your serfs. The family miserable and starve on six shillings and threepence a week, and the princes have the thousand pounds a day."

"You forget, madame, that if the State collapses the army goes too, and that must be kept up," said the Captain, pulling himself together in true military style, and twirling up his moustaches.

"The soldier," said Madame Zuroff, "has just enough to keep him alive till the bullet come home. And the priest, Monsieur Blundell, how much you pay him for hard work burying them in the ground?"

"Church and State," laughed Madame Serneille.

"You ladies are torturing my friend, Marteau; desist, you have done enough," said the Captain. Marteau really looked unhappy.

"Oh no," replied Madame Zuroff, with a winning smile; "Monsieur Marteau enjoy the fun. He is not so sensitive as all that."

"The Archbishop of Canterbury is the head of the Church of England, and has £15,000 a year, with a palace and all sorts of odds and ends. The Archbishop of York, who is next, has as much as the Bishop of London, and that is £10,000 a year, palaces given in."

"How much does the single man have in winter, when he is destitute?" quizzed Madame Serneille.

"Why, tenpence a day, or four and twopence a week," replied Blundell. "Then the Bishop of Durham manages to live on £7,000 a year which the country pays him. The Bishop of Winchester is paid £6,500; of Ely, £5,500; of Bath, Gloucester, Oxford, and Worcester, £5,000 a year each of them."

"And the family of eight?" again quizzed Madame Serneille.

"Six shillings and threepence a week," replied Blundell. "But when I mentioned those salaries I forgot to say there are other bishops who don't get quite as much."

"Indeed," said Madame Serneille; "you really surprise me. Can you assure us, Monsieur Blundell,

they are paid at least fifteen pence a day in cold weather?"

"Oh, Madame Serneille, you will never give me peace till I state the lot, I presume. Their stipends vary from £3,000 a year upwards, but as the amount is *so small*, I never trouble to remember the particulars."

"You are magnificent, Monsieur Blundell," said Madame Zuroff. "We so glad Monsieur Marteau bring you down to luncheon. Some of the gentlemen fifteen thousand a year and not work much, others fifteen pence a day for a family, and work very hard for it, and Monsieur Marteau he always think of his horse and his cart."

"Do they provide their own coals out of that pay, Monsieur Blundell?" asked Madame Serneille.

"Not likely," said the Captain; "they are both on the same level there, at any rate. They will be provided with firing for nothing, for ever!"

"It is diabolical!" said Marteau, upon whom the pleasantries and banter had made a deep impression, and a painful effect, which was just what the ladies had hoped for. "I had no idea it was as bad as that. 'Pon my soul, I hadn't."

"Do the bishops manage to pay the landlord his rent without asking him to call another time for it, Monsieur Blundell, out of the £10,000 a year, or does he have to call twice for it?" asked Madame Serneille.

"Well," replied Blundell; "I doubt whether they would be able to guarantee punctuality in payment, but as the bishops are provided with palaces rent free, they are quite ignorant of the delicate attention of a landlord. They are entitled, which means, they take good care to secure, a few other little comforts besides, which enables them to live almost within the bounds of their modest incomes by the exercise of a little economy."

"How delicious!" said Madame Serneille; "little comforts are added to £1,000 a day, and but little comfort to fifteen pence a day for eight serfs. I see what you mean, Monsieur Blundell. You are delightful. Charming man!"

"It is quite true, anyhow," said Blundell.

"Awful!" said Marteau.

"Deuced rough," said the Captain.

"And yet you know nought of the other tyranny in my country," said Madame Zuroff, as an expression of pain again crossed her face.

"Very good thing for him that he is ignorant of it," said Madame Serneille.

"Your populace cheer," continued Madame Zuroff, "and throw up the hat when the nobility honour them by driving the barouche over them. Then, when Monsieur Marteau runs the wheel of the dog's-cart over the legs, they say, thank you, Monsieur Marteau, for the honour."

"Don't attribute such carelessness to me, madame.

I feel for these people, but I cannot alleviate their sufferings. Show me the way, and I will do all in my power to help them."

"Enlisted already," said the Captain, *sotto voce*.

"Ah," said Madame Zuroff; "you have still the heart left. You will be the reformer when we teach you more."

"Madame Zuroff," said the Captain, "you are a most dangerous siren. You had better not make proselytes. Or if you must, pray spare my friend from the ordeal. I think too much of his fine nature to look lightly on while you take so much advantage of it."

Madame Zuroff did not reply.

"You know," resumed the Captain, "what it will lead to. Why do you do it? Beautiful, clever, and endowed with the most fascinating charms by nature, you pervert them to expose the sores and defects in social usages."

"Captain d'Everell," said Madame Zuroff, speaking with some distress; "what do you think these qualities were given me for but to try and alleviate the misery of the world?"

"'Tis too gigantic a task to undertake," said the Captain; "all do not suffer."

"Have I not suffered?" she replied. "Do I not suffer untold anguish every day of my life, and yet you cowardly men are willing to stand by and smoke your pipes in silence. Be done. Let me go my way."

"But these people you struggle for," protested the Captain, "are unused to any other life or condition, and it is only a source of unhappiness to point out to them the impossible."

"Then let the hopeless remain so, if they will," said Madame Serneille; "the workmen are not the only people in the world; there are others, with all the sensitive organisms, who suffer because of their acute sensibilities, but who do not possess the animal strength necessary to overthrow brute force. What of them, Captain?"

"For either of you ladies to be without a pair of gloves, would be purgatory to you, I admit; but to the plebeian to be without a coat is no hardship at all."

"Would the sleet in falling, and the frost in covering the earth, Captain, be less cold to the humble than to the rich?" said Madame Serneille.

"Not altogether so," replied the Captain. "The sensitive and refined classes suffer most, we know. The more sensitive and responsive the brain and nerves may be, the more harrowing becomes the same punishment."

"Ah! Captain d'Everell, then you make the case out far worse than we do," said Madame Zuroff. "You filch the money from the middle classes, who are always at work and feel adverse circumstances most severely, and you throw it to the priest and the nobility in millions of roubles, and you screw and

grudge a few kopecks to the serf to ward off starvation."

"That is true," said Blundell; "the middle class is the real and great tax-payer of the country. Too respectable to revolt, too high and independent to accept charity, and too manly to be State drones."

"Superb sentiments!" exclaimed Madame Zuroff.

"That is the class which is the backbone of a nation. It supplies all the brains and much of the physical labour of the country. Specially the brains, which are so necessary to make the manual labour of the so-called working classes of much value to them or to anybody else."

"Why, Monsieur Blundell," said Madame Serneille, in an insinuating tone, "you, then, are a revolutionary and republican. We are deeply indebted to Monsieur Marteau for bringing us such a congenial companion."

"I am not a revolutionary," said Blundell, as he leant forward towards Madame Serneille. "I would not wish to see the present order upset by any earthquake action. The change must be gradual. The people must be educated and the rulers taught. The people in particular require general school education—not this political catch-penny trash they have meted out to them because they are endowed with a parliamentary franchise and know not how to use it."

"Monsieur Blundell," said Madame Serneille, "you are carried away by too much enthusiasm now;" and she put the tips of her fingers on Blundell's arm.

Blundell at once subsided. The Captain chuckled to himself at the instantaneous restraining effect on Blundell. Madame Zuroff watched Marteau, to see if any harm had been done to the attempt to convert him.

"Some more Benedictine liqueur, Monsieur Marteau?" she said.

"Thanks, I will," replied Marteau.

The Captain, having been left free for a few moments, returned to the charge.

"My dear Madame Serneille," said he, "your sweet sex should not yet advocate extending liberty, considering the disaster it has brought upon yourselves."

"How so, my dear Captain?" she asked, pouting a *moue* at him.

"For the last thirty years your charming sex, beautiful creatures, but a butterfly sex ——"

"Captain!" exclaimed Madame Serneille, as she leant back in the lounge aghast at his audacity.

"—— *Butterfly sex*, has been given greater and greater freedom, before they have been taught the risks of freedom. They have been conceded a dangerous *liberty* before they have the *ability* to take care of themselves."

"What is this you are preaching, *mon Capitaine*?" interposed Madame Zuroff, whisking about from Marteau to d'Everell.

"I was only saying, in polite terms, that your sex had been given liberty that no Turk, Japanese, or

Chinese had yet conceded to the ladies of his house, and it has only resulted in bringing you disaster."

"Pooh, pooh!" vociferated Madame Zuroff; "we are not Turks, nor Turkies, nor geese. *That* for the disaster," and she snapped her fingers with great energy.

"How many of your sex have so *very much more* discretion than some—than some of these barbarians who have but primitive ideas how to avail themselves of the advantages of liberty and avoid its dangers?"

"Whatever danger is there in liberty, you delightful, bearded woman-teaser?" asked Madame Serneille, in a jocular way.

The Captain, laughing tumultuously at the personal reference, replied—

"If all women were as shrewd and pretty as you two ladies, I admit there would not be much harm; but all are not so. Eh! Marteau, you agree? Therefore to give to the Turks, Japs, Chinese, or even European women the great freedom of the present day without educating them to the dangers which accompany it, is like giving freedom to the pigeons which we have cooped up in traps at a Hurlingham Match."

"Sophia, do you hear? first we were in the category of butterflies, then Turks, Japs and Chinese, and now we are likened to pigeons," said Madame Serneille.

"It is very sweet."

"Poor silly little pigeon," continued the Captain, "has been kept in a trap, and when the line is pulled a vision of freedom opens before his eyes of which he instantly takes advantage."

"Then the ogres of society," said Madame Serneille, in a bass voice, "the profligate scions of depravity, stand ready to shoot him down as soon as he is free."

"Oh, my dear Madame Serneille," said the Captain, "we don't like to put it in so many words; but it is really *useless* to attend a pigeon match unless you shoot the birds."

"Fie! Captain, fie! I am ashamed of you," said Madame Serneille.

"I agree with Captain d'Everell," said Blundell, "on that particular point."

"What, the shooting, Monsieur Blundell?" asked Madame Serneille. "Do you now?"

"No, the illustration. They are entitled to freedom, but should not be entrusted with it till they know how to use it for good and not for evil."

"Which class do you refer to, Monsieur Blundell; the butterflies, the beauties, the serfs or Turks, the Japs or pigeons. Perhaps you mean Sophia and me?"

"I should not like the invidious task of pointing out any particular persons," said Blundell.

"Ah, then you would like to have us both in bondage, would you? With all the rest?"

"Very much," interjected the Captain.

"Then you will be disappointed, Captain d'Everell, for the hundredth time in your life," said Madame Serneille.

She then devoted herself to Blundell, whom she gradually drew back to the original theme of their general conversation.

"Have you ever seen these people drawn up in line, Monsieur Blundell," she asked, turning her back on the Captain, "on the pavement outside the work-houses in the depth of winter, hungry, heart-broken, dispirited, poorly clad and miserable, waiting for their petty doles?"

"Many times," said Blundell. "I have seen them in lines waiting and shivering for a few paltry pence for a day's work when bread was 6d. a loaf. It struck me as wonderful that they did not rise up in revolt, and seize the carts of provisions they saw pass, or wreck the carriages of those who, wrapped in furs and rugs, so heedlessly and gaily travel over the roads."

"Pray, do not speak more of these scenes," said Marteau, "they are most unpleasant to me."

"My dear friend," said Madame Zuroff, "you are too sensitive to listen. Some day, when you are more able to listen to the woes of my peasants, I will tell you of more of their sufferings in my country."

"Do be careful what you do," said the Captain, "you are too potent a witch for many men. Already

you have cast a spell over Monsieur Marteau that it will take me a week to eradicate."

"Oh dear me! my noble Captain, how very dreadful," laughed Madame Serneille.

"And you," said the Captain, addressing Madame Serneille, "are guilty of trying to ensnare another friend of mine. Between the two of you there will be mischief."

"But there is one gay Capitaine," said Madame Zuroff, "who will not be made a proselyte of by our blandishments; eh!—is it not so, *mon Capitaine*?"

"Yes," replied the Captain, "there is one who is proof against your most deadly fire, when you use this kind of ammunition. You must change the projectile, madame, if you wish to hit me in a vulnerable part."

"Make eyes at him," said Madame Serneille, "then he drops to the ground like the pigeons he spoke of."

"It is rather late for that," said the Captain, "for if my eyes do not deceive me, here comes the waiter to announce luncheon is served."

"Monsieur Marteau," said Madame Zuroff, "your arm, if you please."

CHAPTER VII.

A LARGE comfortable chamber in a mansion in a suburb of Paris was well furnished with easy chairs, and lighted with a brilliance that raised the spirits of the fifteen persons seated round a long table. Of the company of fifteen, three were ladies of mature age. The gentlemen all smoked, and if the truth must be fully revealed, the ladies occasionally indulged in a choice cigarette. The conversation was of politics of the present and politics of the future. To look at the company, one would never suspect they were the chief organisers of a powerful political combination, whose name had struck terror into the souls of the most independent European sovereigns. Yet such, indeed, were these people. Their features showed an habitual calm, though somewhat anxious expression. Their facial lineaments gave no indication that they were conscious that their careers as free citizens might terminate at any moment at the order to surrender vociferated to them by *gendarmes* sent to arrest them. Nothing emphatic in tone showed they were engaged in desperate enterprises that must, by the very violence of their nature, recoil and destroy the authors of their existence. Few people would have surmised that this band had risen to eminence and fame from the scattered units the police failed to arrest when the famous "Society of Three Eyes" was raided, and its members imprisoned in wholesale numbers.

The famous "Society of Three Eyes" received its name from its chief conspirator, the Italian Prisilitani. The strange name they were known by arose in this way:—Prisilitani, its chief, spent most of his time brooding over the extensive collection of preparations contained within the Florentine Cabinet of Anatomy in Paris. He had two reasons for exercising his eccentric habit.

The prime reason, so he averred, was that he could more easily think out the means to further promote the objects of the society when surrounded by emblems of death. Moreover, he could continually feast his eyes on the absurdity of the strongest mortal blindly fighting against a microbe, a ten-thousandth part of an inch in length, when the mortal ignored the existence of the microbe. The polished shelves around him were crowded with examples, showing the valiant mortal conquered by the insignificant microbe.

"The giant," said Prisilitani, "is like the bullying government of autocracy. By sheer strength and brute force he coerces the feeble and weak. But the tiny microbes, the pathological bacteria, the infusoria which arise whenever any flesh becomes foul or putrid by age or decay, they will destroy the giant in the end, though individually they only measure one ten-thousandth of an inch in length. We of the secret society are the microbes. The giant is the autocrat who cannot see us with the coarse naked

eye. He knows not of our existence, because his organism is too gross, too conceited, and too majestic to look for aught but a bloated creature his own size. But, mind you, we, the incomprehensible little germs of attack, will yet lay him low. When I walk, or sit, or think, in the Florentine Cabinet of Anatomy, ideas flow in on to me, and I imbibe hope from the work of destruction effected by tiny microbes. That is my prime reason for visiting it.

"My next reason is that less notice is taken of a scholar's movements, and no explanation is demanded for any neglect of conventionalism in citizenship.

"I am inspired by the specimens of disease and death. I will name a society after some of the most horrible. Its work shall match its name. In the Florentine Cabinet of Anatomy I see every day in my walks the preserved heads of three children born at different times, in which the monstrosity of deformity lies in the eyes. Each head has not two eyes such as we have, but only one eye, and that is sunk in the centre of the forehead."

Prisilitani, always studying in the Cabinet, and perhaps particularly attracted by such a horrible sight, named the secret society after the museum specimens, "The Society of Three Eyes."

The description of these specimens is not a fable, but the truth. The stories of giants with one eye in the centre of the forehead may have originated in romance, but this monstrosity is exhibited in

three human heads preserved in the Florentine Cabinet in Paris.

Moreover, if another repulsive monster whom fiction has utilised for its own ends, and who has done good service as the pith of an office tale, be wanted, it can be found as a product of nature in the Florentine Cabinet; it is the skeleton of a child with a perfectly formed dog's head.

From the few unarrested members of the Society of Three Eyes had sprung up the powerful organisation of the International Society. The inner circle of this society were in conclave in the well lighted room described above. The special reason for meeting on this occasion was to receive a revolutionist and obtain from him a solemn oath of allegiance to the Inner Circle of the Society. Not that such an obligation would necessarily deter a man from breaking away from his comrades if he wished to do so, but it would be a means to encourage his colleagues to carry out their part of the obligation to each other, and ruthlessly slay any member who had turned traitor to the society. That was the most effective way of keeping men to their promises in the past, and it has not been superseded by anything better in the present. Upon the integrity of all depended the safety of all. Precautions were taken to hide the identity, name, address, occupation, and friends of every member of a secret political society, so that the gentle persuasion of

torture would be ineffectual to extort information which was not possessed. There was a lot in that. A prisoner could not expose his comrades, for he had insufficient information of them. The more powerful a society became the greater precaution was necessary to hide identity. Nearly all societies are secure when their secrets are confined to a few. But a few cannot carry out adequate propaganda work, and hence the numbers must be increased and the society be extended, to be effective. With the increase of numbers creeps in the danger of exposure. Some members are admitted who, to say the least of them, are indiscreet. From chance words or eavesdroppers, the police hear of these societies. They trace up the clue, and the society is unearthed and destroyed. Then the work commences over again, sometimes after good work has been accomplished, more often after failure. From those who escape imprisonment or death, in course of time a new organisation always originates. It grows, attains gigantic proportions, becomes powerful and capable of striking telling blows, becomes unwieldy, and then owing to its very magnitude the knowledge of its existence inevitably comes to the ears of the authorities, and it suffers destruction. Then the same cycle of existence is played over again. As long, however, as these societies exist, they will have to be reckoned with by the authorities. Their members are not drawing-room politicians or

men who crawl into parliament by disreputable means in order to procure an easy, though perhaps dishonest, living. Their members have the characteristics of manhood, though they may be misguided in their judgment. They are prepared to sacrifice all they possess, and their lives into the bargain, for that which they consider to be the public welfare.

Such a set of men formed the Inner Circle of the International Society.

The member they purposed receiving into the circle had worked with the Warsaw Branch for two years, and on the special recommendation of that branch he had travelled to Paris intending to take up his abode there as long as the society required him to remain in the city. The fifteen members of the Inner Circle of the International Society sat in their assembly room till eleven at night.

They were disturbed by the entrance of the porter, who acted as general attendant in the house. He was a muscular, astute man of great shrewdness.

"What is it, André?" asked a clean-shaven man of forty, who sat at the end of the table. His features were deeply chiselled, and his nose was prominent. There was a certain occasional sternness about his eyes which showed he could be as firm as a rock when occasion demanded. As he spoke he turned full face to the new arrival.

"There are some visitors outside, Monsieur Pre-

sident," replied André, "and I think they are those whom we expect to-night. I came here first to see that all was well."

Every man, and every woman too, instantly drew a revolver from his pocket and examined it to see that it was in order. This was not a meeting of people who cared to face government prosecution, but a meeting of people who knew their lives might be in jeopardy any moment, and perhaps it was better to fight for escape with the chance of being shot down than be consigned to rot in a prison cell. Some members were also armed with daggers, which were concealed in the breast pocket.

"All right?" asked the President of the company. Silence reigned.

"All right, then, André," said he; "see who it is."

Two members at once rose and followed André from the room to the street-door of the house, and prepared themselves to support him against aggression.

A knock sounded from the door.

André stood still and waited. Two knocks in rapid succession followed.

"Who is there?" demanded André.

"I," replied the visitor.

"Anybody with you?" enquired André.

"One," replied the visitor.

"Then you had better come to-morrow, said André.

"Very well," said the visitor, and he knocked twice again.

"Why do you not go away?" said André.

"I cannot delay," said the visitor.

André opened the door. Two men stepped in. André shut the door behind them. The party of five then moved towards the room where the others had already assembled.

"This gentleman," said the man who had knocked, as he bowed to the president and company, "is Monsieur Ronski."

Every person carefully and searchingly scrutinised the new-comer, who stood within the doorway.

"We are pleased to see you," said the President, in an easy, affable way. "Pray come in and be seated here."

He pointed to an empty chair by his side.

The new-comer walked round, shook hands with the President, and sat down beside him.

"Monsieur Ronski," said the President, addressing the stranger, "we all know you by repute, and we are glad of a personal and more intimate acquaintance with you. The society, it is almost needless for me to remind you, has to be very strict in admitting to its Inner Circle those who have already laboured for liberty, and yet are still willing to assist in a further degree the efforts to benefit all citizens."

"I am aware of that," replied Ronski, "and I am prepared to assist you, and take equal risks with you, otherwise I should not trouble to intrude here."

"Very good," said the President ; whilst every person, directly or indirectly, still watched the newcomer.

"Before asking you to subscribe the oath, I must caution you that in the Inner Circle any indiscretion has only one ending. You understand the purport of my meaning. We play for free life or death."

"Certainly, Monsieur President. If I betray any news I am prepared to suffer extinction, and on the other hand, if any one of those who constitute your Inner Circle betray me, I shall know how to deal with them without asking for information."

"That is exactly the situation," said the President. "You save me a lot of trouble by your clear exposition of the situation."

"I am acquainted with the necessities of the case," said Ronski, "and I abide by the consequences. There is no retreat for any of us who are here to-night."

"Very good," said the President ; "I must ask you to repeat these words after me as a pledge that you will abide by them."

"I am quite prepared to do so."

"Then say this," said the President.

"I, Ronski, pledge myself to keep secret the words and deeds of the International Society. I will carry out the orders issued by the majority of the Inner Circle, even to death itself. If I turn traitor I

willingly agree to forfeit my life. If any other member turn traitor, I swear to take his life at the first favourable opportunity, in spite of everything."

"Do you freely and without mental reservation accept these terms, and are you prepared to abide by them?" asked the President.

"I am," replied Ronski.

Every person present covered Ronski with his revolver.

"You swear to forfeit your life if you betray any of us?" asked the President.

"I do," replied Ronski.

"And you swear to take any member's life who betrays a member of the Inner Circle?" again asked the President.

"I do," replied Ronski.

"And you, ladies and gentlemen, swear to take his life, should he betray you in any matter?" asked the President.

"We do," replied the assembly. The firearms were replaced.

"Then let me advise you, Monsieur Ronski, always to be armed. You may need it for defence and you may need it for attack."

Thus was Ronski's admission completed. The members thereupon entered into general conversation.

After a short interval the President said:—

"I have received one thousand francs for Pisani, of

Venice. Who will undertake to hand it to him? It is for the Venice work, but has to be given to Pisani. Those were the instructions of the donor."

"I will deliver it," said Colomo, a thin, dirty-looking, wizened-faced man. The money was at once handed to him. Such security did they feel and such faith had they in each other, and such confidence was reposed in the penalty which followed default, that no one doubted the money would reach its proper destination.

"Monsieur President," said a German, who smoked strong tobacco in a foul pipe, "how does ze propaganda prozeed? We have not known of the last issue of the 'Bell Zound.' Ze cobby was from ze press two months now, and no report of another."

"It was all circulated," replied the President. "The artisans in particular were eager to obtain copies. They are becoming a great strength to the International Society. The more they read our propaganda literature the more wedded do they become to our tenets and principles, and the stronger do they believe in reform."

"Goot," replied the German.

"There is one matter I wish to speak about, ladies and gentlemen," said the President. "It is the request of a hard-working revolutionary to be admitted to the Inner Circle."

"Sharman?" asked the German.

"No, Russian," replied the President; whereat a smile passed round the table.

"Ze circle must not be too large," said the German, and occasioned more hilarity. "But it wants all ze power of ze vorkers."

"Where does he come from?" asked a lady.

"Geneva, at present," said the President; "but originally Moscow, or some neighbouring town in Russia, if I am not mistaken."

"Monsieur President," again asked the lady, "is that the gentleman against whom there is a slight objection?"

"Yes," replied the President.

"Then he should not be admitted," said the lady, in decisive tones.

"What hab he done special for ze admission?" asked the German of the President.

"He has been of signal service to us," said the President, "on at least two occasions. First, he obtained, in some way which we do not know, the knowledge that a domiciliary visit would be paid to a certain house in Moscow where we had two hundred copies of the 'Bell Sound,' and where three members of the society lived who distributed them. By the warning he gave nothing was discovered on the premises when the search was made."

"Goot," said the German.

"Then two members of the society stayed at the house of a Ukrivateli in Warsaw. In the middle of the night this man drove through the streets at a break-neck gallop, reached the house of the Ukrivateli, and found the members had no passports.

They escaped but ten minutes prior to the police visit. He gave that alarm which saved them from arrest."

"Still, Monsieur President," said Marteau, who now spoke for the first time since the admission of the new-comer, "we cannot exercise too much caution. We have received news, very vague news, I admit, still it is news, or possibly very strong prejudice that should make us delay until we are more assured of the worth of this member of the society."

"I think it is mere prejudice," said a member.

"That may be so," returned Marteau. "She has done so much for the society that I am almost superstitious enough to believe evil will result if we ignore her intuition."

"Ze intuition of ze ladies," said the German, "cannot receive ze support of logic, and is of no value."

"They are sometimes right," said Marteau.

"Ze intuition of von is opposed to ze intuition of ze other," said the German. "Both cannot be right at ze same time."

The three ladies at the meeting were highly amused at the German's philosophy. The observations of the members led to nothing, as there was no absolute, tangible ground of objection. At length the President said—

"Well, if the Inner Circle have a doubt in this

instance, it would be wrong to entrust our secrets to new members. All societies are wrecked by too many members crowding in."

Two of the three ladies present supported the contention of Marteau not to accept the applicant until more was known of him. The Inner Circle therefore refused the admission of the revolutionist to their councils.

The President then calmly announced that more funds were necessary to complete a tunnel which was being driven for the purpose of placing a mine under the main railway line.

Marteau and others urged that money should be provided to complete this work, as if the plot were successful more good would accrue to the cause by one decisive blow than by dozens of minor enterprises.

"Vere is ze funds to come from?" asked the German. "Already four months have been spent on the tunnel, and now zome more months to complete. Ze funds cannot always be supplied. Ze work is too slow."

"It has to be performed in a most secret way," said a member.

"Yah!" said the German; "ze longer it is ze more likely to fail."

"It is an enormous work," said Marteau, "and so far has been an absolute secret. With the exception of the friends excavating and some one or two of us,

no one knows either where it is or anything more about it."

"We could obtain money by revealing some of the particulars," said the President; "but we might just as well throw the whole thing up as do that."

"Better to throw it up than to allow a word to escape us," said Marteau. "To throw it up would not sacrifice the friends who are slaving at the tunnel, which would be something."

The lady who had approved of the admission of the revolutionist, whom the Inner Circle were not willing to admit, then interposed.

"I have heard in an indirect manner," said she, "of a gentleman who would, I think, give us some donation."

"Ah!" said the President, "that would be a help to us."

"He would have to be approached with tact."

"Is he here in Paris?"

"No, in Vienna."

"You mean Schneider, the stockbroker, of Stephanplatz," said Marteau.

"No, I mean a banker who sympathises with socialistic movements and who is very rich. If he were approached by an accredited agent I think he would help on the tunneling."

"Vell, ve must try him," said the German.

"Who could do it?" asked the President. "Hertz, you are an Austrian and can be most useful at an interview; will you call on the banker?"

"I cannot leave Paris for a week," said Hertz.

"It is important," said the President.

"I know it, Monsieur President, but it is impossible with the business I have on hand."

"Can our friends wait a week or so?" asked Marteau.

"Zey vill have to," said the German.

"If they be idle it costs just as much to keep them as if they were excavating. They must have food."

"Can any other person go to Vienna?" asked the President.

No one volunteered.

"I will go in a week," said Hertz. "Give me the letter of introduction. At the same time I will learn all the Vienna news and bring it back with me."

"I will write to a friend in Vienna who will meet you," said the lady who had previously spoken. "He will see to everything for you."

"Thank you," said Hertz; "in a week I will start."

"That is settled then," said the President, as he rose, put on his hat, and prepared to depart.

The others did the same. André, the attendant, was summoned, and in reply to an enquiry, announced that no suspicious characters were to be seen about the neighbourhood, and nothing indicated that the house was being watched. About half of those present then left *viâ* the front entrance, one or two at a time, so as not to excite notice.

The other half waited the return of André, who, all being ready, preceded them, carrying a light. They descended a flight of stairs below street level, passed along a narrow passage, and then ascended another staircase, and along a second passage, to a door opening on to the street. Here André, from a point of vantage, and assisted by others, made a careful reconnoitre of the thoroughfare. Being satisfied nothing suspicious was to be observed, he opened the door, and the assembled people departed in twos and threes in the same way the others had done from the front of the other house.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the Ringstrasse, in the Austrian Capital, was a rich Hebrew named Henri Emanuel, partner in the private banking company of Gottell, Krietzner, and Emanuel. A little benevolent-looking, shiny-faced old gentleman, dressed in a long black frock coat and a white waistcoat which exposed a sea of shirt-front in which sparkled three Brazilian diamonds of great lustre. His black cloth trousers were remarkable for their breadth and polish. On his fingers flashed diamonds set in rather thin gold rings, so that their size and brilliance might show to the greatest advantage.

Emanuel sat at a walnut-roller-topped writing-desk, in an inner room elaborately and imposingly fur-

nished as a private office. Even bankrupt banks always have most elaborate and expensive offices to transact business in. They present an appearance of solidity and wealth which inspires confidence in dubious customers.

Emanuel beamed a kind smile on all around him, just such a smile as a man who had recovered a bad debt would smile in the privacy of his office.

With the banker were two gentlemen. One was Hertz, who wore a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles and a massive watch-chain, and carried in his hand a rather dented gold-headed Malacca cane. The other gentleman was pale-faced and faultlessly dressed, even to the buttons of his gloves. He was Petronski, a member of the International Society, but not of its Inner Circle. He was the person mentioned by the Inner Circle in the previous chapter.

"I think I understand from your letter of introduction," said Emanuel, with unctuous suavity of address, "that you are engaged in assisting the poor with a view to help many of them to emigrate to the Continent of America." He raised his gold-mounted *pince-nez* and adjusted them to fully survey the visitors.

"Quite so," replied Petronski; "we have already sent one hundred people to the States, and in order to extend the charitable work we must be provided with more capital. It is sad to admit we are so pressed by want of funds."

"I subscribe so much that I hardly feel disposed to increase my charity list at present," said Emanuel, as he shifted a pile of newspapers from one side of the desk to the other. Each newspaper had been preserved as it bore evidence of some excessive profit made by the firm of Gottell, Krietzner, and Emanuel. Still the visitors did not know that.

"The people we wish to succour, Mr. Emanuel," said Hertz, "are in very indigent circumstances, and unable to help themselves. They are in sore distress. It is only the rich who can keep them, and your friend, the Baron, assured us that we should not have to apply to you in vain in such a good cause."

"What is the trade of these people?" asked Emanuel, twisting round in his chair and fondly gazing at a flashing diamond on his forefinger.

"Excavation, that is, men who labour with the pick and shovel," said Hertz, who appeared to dislike his own remark as soon as it was uttered.

Petronski shot one keen glance at Hertz, as if he had heard some news of importance that it was not intended should be revealed.

"And what part of the country are they living in?" said Emanuel. "I cannot assist the whole world. My business is with the whole world, but the profit is too limited to furnish charity for the whole world." And he playfully patted the pile of newspapers again.

"There are some at Iver——"

"A long way."

"Others at Vologda, and others further south at Vladimir."

"All in Central Russia, then?" said Emanuel.

"All in Central Russia," replied Hertz.

"Ah, indeed. Have you gentlemen just arrived from Vladimir, and come on to see me?" asked Emanuel.

"No," said Petronski, "we came from Kiev, and after transacting our business in Vienna we shall travel to Munich, Geneva and Paris."

"All on business of benevolence?" said Emanuel.

"Yes," replied Petronski.

"And how long have you been actively at work?"

"Four months very hard at it," said Hertz; "but a very long time assisting in other ways."

Petronski made mental note of the time, as if it were worth remembering.

"And how much do you ask me to contribute, gentlemen?" said Emanuel. Only for the high recommendation of my good friend, the Baron, to whom I am under deep obligation, I fear I could not entertain your request."

"We must leave the amount to yourself," said Petronski. "Any sum you donate will be made good use of in the cause of humanity."

"Yes, I have no doubt you will do good with it, gentlemen," said Emanuel, as he picked out the letter of recommendation from a pigeon hole, and

carefully re-read it. "I think myself that the poorer class of artisans deserve more help than the labourers you have taken under your protection."

"Exactly so," added Petronski.

"Well, gentlemen, suppose I hand you a cheque for a thousand florins, I presume that will assist a little?"

"Thank you," said Hertz; "it will help us very much, Mr. Emanuel." Hertz was overjoyed to receive such a sum of money, as it was far more than he expected.

"And my friend the Baron, was he well and happy when you left him?"

"Yes," replied Petronski, "in very good health, and he asked to be specially remembered to you. It is not likely he will visit Vienna this season."

"Is time playing much havoc with him?" asked Emanuel.

"Yes, very much, as it is with all of us," said Petronski.

"I have great respect for him," said Emanuel, as he drew a cheque book towards him and filled in a cheque.

"A most estimable man," said Petronski.

"Suppose, then, I make it fifteen hundred florins, gentlemen, for so worthy an object. I think that will meet all your wishes without unduly pressing on me."

"Gracious," thought Hertz, "what an extraordinary man."

Hertz and Petronski thanked the banker for his generosity. Hertz, with tremulous fingers, received the cheque, and could hardly withdraw his eyes from it. They rose, bade the banker good day, and departed. Petronski, noting that Hertz had preceded him and was absent-minded in regard to other affairs, took the gold-headed Malacca cane in his hand, which Hertz had forgotten as he left the office.

As soon as they had cashed the cheque at the counter of the firm of which Emanuel was a partner, they wended their way beneath the shadows of the trees of that broad and magnificent street called the Ringstrasse. As they walked towards Stephansplatz Hertz said :—

“I am surprised to see him part with his money so readily.”

“He is good-hearted and most liberal in his subscription if he should give at all,” replied Petronski.

“Indeed, he must be, to hand so much over to two strangers.”

“You are mistaken there,” said Petronski. “Although we are strangers to him, our introduction simply made us collectors. It carried everything before it. He would do anything for the Baron.”

“And who is the Baron?” asked Hertz; “was he aware we wanted so much money and what it was for?”

“I can’t say,” rejoined Petronski. “The Baron is a Russian subject, but I am pledged not to mention

his name without his sanction, so I cannot tell it even to you. He is afraid the Government might suspect him of the sympathy which he really feels for us, and he has no desire to engage in trouble at his time of life."

"Well," said Hertz, "it is the easiest money I think we have ever received. And from a Jew, too, and a banker, and a man of business, and wearing diamonds which he admires all day long."

Petronski laughed, as he explained it, by saying:—

"They are very liberal, if benevolent at all."

"But beyond a very few of the meagrest particulars he was apparently satisfied."

"The Baron did that."

"Yes?"

"It does not matter, Hertz, we have the money and there is an end of it. When you don't receive any you are vexed, when you have it showered on you it seems you still suffer a grievance. I think in the circumstances I will bid you good day."

And Petronski assumed all the airs and sullenness of a man who had been unnecessarily hurt and misunderstood, when he had rendered a service to his friend.

Hertz, believing Petronski was offended, and that he might have shown too light an appreciation of the work of the revolutionist, hastened to apologise for his ingratitude.

"I hope, my dear Petronski, I have not hurt your

feelings; but the donation did seem to me too good to be in concord with the usual luck of the society, and that drew the remark from me which had, perhaps, better have been left unsaid. Our society is already deeply indebted to you, and this places it still further under obligation."

"Do not say any more," replied Petronski, in a mollified tone; "it is of no consequence."

"My dear Petronski, when the Inner Circle knows of your further assistance, they will desire to express their thanks. Is there any way in which you would prefer it?"

"None," said Petronski. "I do not desire their special thanks. I am working for the overthrow of autocracy, and so are they. I do not wish for any thanks from my colleagues."

"I am sure of that," said Hertz; "we want a few more men like you in the Inner Circle."

"It does not signify," replied Petronski, whose sole ambition for a long time had been to gain admission to their Council. By expressing indifference he knew he was more likely to attain his end with such a body.

"I shall report to them, and I presume I may carry your consent to come to Paris if they think it better for you to do so?"

"I am indifferent," said Petronski; "but believing in the revolutionary cause I shall place myself at their disposal. I must again bid you good day," con-

tinued Petronski, as he endeavoured to leave his companion.

"Good day, then," said Hertz, as he held out his hand.

"By the way," said Petronski, as a sort of after-thought, "do you go back straight to Geneva?"

"No," replied Hertz; "I have first to visit Vladimir, and then probably go on to Tver."

"And Moscow afterwards?"

"I can hardly say, but being so close I may stay there a few days. I am too much wrapped up in the good fortune of a successful mission to think about aught else at present."

The companions parted. Hertz, as he truthfully said, completely wrapped up in himself, and proud to be the bearer of funds, walked towards a bridge spanning the Danube canal. At home he prepared himself to continue his journey across Europe to the city of Moscow.

Petronski, jubilant and satisfied, but outwardly careless, took a different route, and returned to his lodgings in the attractive Graben, the leading business street in Vienna.

Petronski, having reached his destination, noticed for the first time that he still carried Hertz's Malacca cane.

"I shall have to take it back to his house," said Petronski to himself. "It is a precious long way, though. I won't bother. He can call for it as he goes to the station. He is sure to miss it."

Then he threw open the windows and walked up and down, rubbing his hands in glee at his own acumen and subtlety.

Some three weeks later Petronski vacated his apartments in the Graben, and left Vienna, ostensibly on a visit to Venice. But it was not to Italy he travelled, but to Switzerland.

CHAPTER IX.

IN Geneva, that centre of Universities, Cosmopolitan Students, Socialists, Nihilists, Terrorists, Revolutionaries and the Watch-making Industry, two members of the International Society called upon Petronski at the hotel where he was staying.

Petronski, all civility and politeness, received them with the respect due to members of the Inner Circle of the International Society.

One was the German who spoke in the Inner Circle, and the other was Marteau.

Remarkable cordiality was exhibited by all.

"Is the propaganda work still progressing?" asked Petronski.

"Very slowly," replied the German; "ze difficulty of introducing paper printed abroad is zo great that it is almost useless to try it."

"And it does not contain the latest particulars of local events and movements," added Marteau; "be-

cause the news has to be sent out of the country, and then brought back again in the printed sheets."

"It is rather stale by then," said Petronski.

"Yes," replied Marteau. "We have only one secret press now at work in Russia, and that has been undiscovered for twelve months."

"Very slow," said the German.

"Is that the one in Moscow?" asked Petronski.

"No," said Marteau, "we have none in Moscow. The last was seized and everyone arrested a long while ago, so it was thought better not to erect another there for some time at least."

"The von,ve have now," said the German, "is at Pskov."

"On the main railway line from Warsaw to St. Petersburg?" asked Petronski.

"Yes, that is it; about one hundred and fifty miles from St. Petersburg," said Marteau.

"That looks very risky," said Petronski.

"It is not as risky as it would appear at first sight," replied Marteau. "In a town like that the dvornik is not much in evidence and therefore no watch is kept over a citizen at home. Every neighbour, though, is inquisitive and wishes to know all that transpires. It is easier to conceal from the neighbours than from a dvornik."

"True," said Petronski; "but how are the papers conveyed from Pskov to their destination without exciting suspicion?"

"That is not so very difficult for a town that despatches a large number of crates of poultry and eggs regularly every week to the capital. The eggs are packed in straw. At the bottom of each case for the two weeks in which we distribute the copies is laid a packet of our own paper covered over by old daily newspapers. The crate is delivered to our agent in St. Petersburg."

"But if a crate were delivered to a wrong consignee it would expose the transaction," said Petronski.

"There is that risk, but the consignee in St. Petersburg is our agent and knows when he may expect our special crates. He is there to receive them."

"Excellent way," said Petronski; perfectly at ease and as affable as a man with a clear conscience could be.

"But leaving ze paper circulation alone we have one great honour to confer on you, Petronski," said the German, "for helping ze society zo much."

"Oh, what is it?" asked Petronski.

"Vell," said the German, jerking his words and syllables out of his throat at measured intervals, "Ze Secret Society have lost von of ze Inner Circle, who has gone to England and his place is vacant."

Petronski considered for a few moments, and then said—

"What, then?"

"The Inner Circle," interposed Marteau, "requires

the help of the most able members, and the vacancy having occurred, they have considered they could pay you no greater compliment than by asking you to fill it."

"It is very kind of them to offer it to me," said Petronski.

"It is the highest honour they could pay you," said Marteau, "and it is a mark of their estimate of your real worth."

"I feel duly conscious of the honour," said Petronski.

"We have been deputed to ask you to accompany us to Paris, where a meeting will soon be held."

Petronski hesitated. He was not as anxious now to join the Inner Circle as he was a month ago. Then his anxiety was to be admitted to their Council. Now circumstances had occurred which placed a different complexion on his position. He would rather be away from them. The offer came too late. He therefore tried to avoid accepting it. It had lost its charm for him.

"I am afraid I shall not be able to spare time at present to go with you, gentlemen," he began.

"Vell, ve are here for ze purpose," said the German. "Ze honour is zo great it is imperative to shift from Geneva to attend the Council at vonce."

"It would subject my other engagements to great disorder," pleaded Petronski.

"All ze movements is awkward," said the German,

"but you hab sacrificed zo much for ze society that they must see you in Paris for ze time."

"You really must come," said Marteau; "you have been duly elected and the Circle expects you. Our friends are indebted to you for two warnings."

"That may be," replied Petronski, trying to find a valid reason for refusal. "I want no thanks. All I did was for the good of the cause."

"And our last great scheme will succeed through your instrumentality."

"What is that?" asked Petronski, in well-assumed ignorance of any *special* transactions.

"He did not know, you forget. He was not in ze Circle," said the German.

"Ah, now you are a member of the Inner Circle I can tell you of it," said Marteau.

"Explain ze plot," said the German.

"I should be glad to learn something more had been attempted," said Petronski, in plausible tones.

"If you are going to explain ze plot," said the German, "I will again make search to see no von is listening." And he proceeded to inspect every place that anyone could possibly be hidden in. Apparently satisfied he resumed his seat by Marteau.

"Some months ago," said Marteau, "some of our friends thought it would be feasible to mine under the railway, and they secured a house within reasonable distance in order to make a tunnel there from a convenient distance."

"Dear me," said Petronski, "it is an excellent idea. Why have they abandoned it?"

"Zey have not," said the German.

"Ah, that is right," said Petronski.

"They are still at work at it," said Marteau.

"For months," said the German.

"Yes, for over five months now," said Marteau.

"They have worked day after day tunnelling in the earth, and no one ever guessed the labour of the quiet family who lived there in such church-going respectability."

"You astonish me," exclaimed Petronski.

"It is true, though," returned Marteau. "A time arrived when our friends had expended all their money and were without resources. To retire then would have been most disappointing."

"It would have been cruel to them," said Petronski.

"Most cruel, and the Inner Circle, which had sent as much money as it could, was again appealed to for assistance."

"That was some six weeks ago," added the German.

"They thought of a gentleman in Vienna," said Marteau.

"Mr. Emanuel, you mean?" said Petronski.

"Yah," said the German.

"I notified them that I thought he would help the cause, as he was rich and a sympathiser," said Petronski.

"It was good of you."

"Very good of you," added Marteau. "Every member of the Inner Circle who knows it feels under an obligation to you."

"It is of no consequence," said Petronski, waving his hand in a grandiose manner. "I did what I could."

"Hertz was sent and told not to reveal where the money would go to anyone, or the plot itself to anybody."

"He did not tell me anything directly, but I inferred some plot was almost matured," said Petronski complacently. "It was easy to see that."

"Yah," said the German.

"It was impossible for you to guess the object the money would really promote?" asked Marteau.

"Impossible."

"By your help he secured fifteen hundred florins from the banker."

"I know."

"And took them just in time to prevent the project from collapsing for want of funds."

"Very fortunate," said Petronski.

"The result is that the Inner Circle will receive you with open arms, and personally express their thanks for the timely succour."

"I can visit Paris in, say about a week, but not now," said Petronski.

"My dear friend," said the German, "they wait for you. We cannot take no for the answer back."

"No, it is absolutely impossible for us to return and say you put their welcome off for a week, when you had all along assisted them."

"They will not understand," said the German.

"It will be very inconvenient," said Marteau; and he continued, "we cannot accept no for an answer; you must come with us. Everybody expects you."

Petronski was in a difficult position. He would have refused point blank to go if it would not have looked so uncouth. Eventually he compromised, and agreed to give his decision next morning. By this means he was able to think out all points for and against leaving Geneva. Marteau and the German consequently had to be satisfied without an answer till next day.

CHAPTER X.

THE night of the 14th September was a dismal and miserable one in Paris. The storm which had hovered over the city all day broke at dusk, and from then on to next morning it increased in violence hour by hour. The wind rose to the force of a gale, and the rain fell in torrents. No one, unless compelled by the most urgent necessity, would have faced the fierce elements in their wrath.

One set of persons, however, met together in defiance of everything. They were the members of

the Inner Circle of the Secret Society. They assembled in the long room of the mansion in which Hertz had been instructed to proceed to Vienna in quest of cash for the friends who were tunnelling.

Besides the ladies and gentlemen who were assembled on the previous occasion another gentleman was present. His name was Petronski. He had gained admission in the usual way. He had taken the oath of fidelity as the others had. Beyond this he had been effusively welcomed by the company, owing to his ability to influence the Vienna banker to contribute to the cause.

Petronski, always pale, looked more pallid than customary. He sat between Marteau and the German. Other members sat on the same side of the table with him, but in an irregular line a little away from the table. The President, clean shaved as usual, was at the end of the room.

The three ladies who were present on the former occasion were to be seen occupying the same seats.

"Dreadful night," said a member.

"Fearful," replied another, "and we shall have to return home through it when our conclave is ended."

"Have you heard from the tunnellers?" a member asked the President.

"We have received some news," replied the President.

"Are they making headway?"

"Not altogether," said the President.

"That is bad. Since they have been supplied with ample means they should have done more."

"The Third Section has been in the road," said the President in a tone which electrified them all.

"The Third Section!" exclaimed several persons.

"Yes, the Third Section received intimation of a plot. Knowing something was hatching, they carefully ferreted it out."

"This is serious," said a member. The others, by their anxious looks, evidently thought so too.

"The Third Section," resumed the President, "knows a mine is being driven to the railway line."

"Ah!" Several members half rose in their places. Eagerness and excitement thrilled everyone. Petronski turned paler than before; his eye slowly roved over the faces, and scrutinised each one very closely. No one paid particular attention to him.

"If our friends are aware of it, I hope they have acted on the information."

"My friends," said the President, "they may be acting on it now for aught we know."

Petronski fidgetted in his seat.

"Monsieur President," said a burly, obstinate man, "I do not understand this supernatural calmness if the information be correct. We require to rescue them at once."

"My news is quite correct."

"Then we should also know about it, and take steps to shield them from disaster," said the burly man.

"What more would you do?" asked the President.

"I cannot say, until I know the particulars. What is the good of asking, when you keep me in the dark?"

"The particulars are not so very difficult to fathom. In fact, they are only too plain."

"What are they?"

"Simply these. The Third Section has known of this tunnel some weeks."

"That is impossible, otherwise arrests would have followed," said the burly man, in an off-hand way.

"Not so. That is where you are wrong, my friend. The Third Section are becoming strategists. They are very cunning."

"How so?"

"This way. Our friends hidden away in a hole in the earth are already trapped, and can be taken out at any time they are wanted. They are secure for the time being. So the Third Section left them alone."

"Well," said the burly man, "what next?"

"To trap us all they must not hurry," said the President.

"Some may yet escape from the police, then?" said the burly man.

"Those below cannot, I fear," said the President; "when they are always at work, and the tunnel is watched."

"But they come to the surface sometimes?"

"Certainly. But those working in the cause above ground in other parts are not captured as easily as those in a tunnel. The least alarm and they escape, for they live in the densely populated towns. It is these that make the Third Section delay."

"Have these friends been warned they are in danger of destruction?" asked the burly man, crashing his fist down on the table.

"Pray do not excite yourself. We have done all we could."

"Ah, then you have acted?"

"Yes."

Petronski looked somewhat annoyed, and shifted his chair back. The anxiety of the others was relieved.

"I suppose there is no harm in telling us what steps have been taken by the Inner Circle, and how our friends will evade the police?"

"None, now it is over," said the President.

"Over—how do you know?" asked several members at the same moment. "Are they safe?"

"It is over by now, ladies and gentlemen," said the President; "one way or the other."

"Are they arrested?" asked Petronski, again coming back to the table visibly nervous.

"I cannot say that," said the President.

"Then what is over?" asked the burly man.

"The plot is over. It is ended," said the President.

"Five months underground work for nothing. To-day is the 14th. On the 14th the Third Section would raid all the branches in Russia and capture every person in the tunnel."

Consternation sat on many faces ; sternness on all. Men and women looked at each other as if to gain some encouragement, or a ray of hope. The reticence of the President comforted yet irritated them. He was playing some part they did not understand.

"Perhaps, then, all our friends are lost," said a lady, as she leant back in a dead faint.

"I cannot tell, Madame," quietly replied the President. "It is a matter of a race. Whoever is first *probably* wins. If the Third Section is first, *all is lost*. If our side be first there is still hope for our friends."

Petronski shivered with excitement and his heart beat rapidly. "Pray explain more explicitly."

"If our friends were at their posts on the 14th, that is to-day, they are now in jail under safe lock and key ; but if, as I think has occurred, they may have been warned in time, they possibly have eluded arrest in the towns and have fled over the frontier. It is all a matter of time."

"We must wait to hear the result, I suppose," said Marteau. "The anxiety is dreadful."

"Yes," said the President.

"How did the Third Section learn of the plot?" asked the burly man.

"From a traitor!" exclaimed the President.

Everyone rose, every right hand sought a revolver stock, and all glared at each other.

The President only maintained an imperturbable calm. His coolness and reserve in the matter was unaccountable.

"My friends," said he, "pray be seated again. Do not excite yourselves. It can do no good."

The cool language caused a feeling of relief to pass over the company, who at once resumed their places.

"Pray replace your weapons, they are not required."

The firearms were replaced.

"If you will be kind enough to give me your attention for a few minutes, ladies and gentlemen, I can make the matter clearer to you."

"Explain," said the burly man.

"First of all I should like to ask each of you what is the fitting punishment for any member of the society who is a traitor?"

The President then pointed his finger at the man on his immediate left and waited for a reply.

"Death," said the man.

Then pointing at each one in succession, his hand swept round the room and from each person he received the same word in reply.

"Then you are unanimous," said he, "that a traitor deserves death?"

"We are," said the company

The President rose, pushed back his chair and quietly drew his revolver. An intense nervous tension pervaded the room, every muscle was strained and everyone eager for the next move. The President pointed it towards the ceiling, then like lightning he lowered the point and covered Petronski with it.

At the same moment the German and Marteau, who sat on each side of Petronski, threw themselves on to him and pinioned his arms to his sides, despite his desperate struggles to release himself.

The chairs were smashed and sent flying, the table shifted away, and the whole meeting was in a state of tumult. The struggle of one man battling and tussling against two others and being mastered by them, is an awful sight. The contest for a moment was terrible, then the swaying backwards and forwards was checked by two others, who assisted the German and Marteau to overpower Petronski. By the united strength of the four, he was thrown to the ground bruised and bleeding, his face covered with blood and his clothes torn.

He lay panting and gasping like a hunted animal when he recognises there is no further hope of escape.

"Bind him," said the President.

The burly man brought some rope from the cupboard, and Petronski was securely bound and left on the floor.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the President, "let

us be thankful that we have secured the traitor. It was Petronski."

Expressions of surprise, mingled with a certain amount of anger, escaped from the members. Murmurs of incredulity arose from some. Each man consulted his neighbour.

"Petronski," said the President, "shall have every chance of defending himself. If you like, Petronski, you can answer my indictment, or make any correction, or explain anything you wish, as I proceed."

Petronski swore a fearful oath, cursed them all, and defied them to do their worst. Then he glared at as many as he could see, and remained silent.

"If," said the President, as he took up a position from which he could obtain a full view of the prisoner, "our friends have not been warned in time, and it is doubtful whether such be the case, then every life that is lost will be the work of that man."

The President again rose in some slight agitation and pointed at the prisoner.

"The tunnel plot was a secret till Petronski was told by inadvertence that some move was on foot. Then the Third Section knew of it, but fortunately delayed action in their greediness to catch us all. If that is untrue, Petronski, pray say so. The fifteen hundred florins given by banker Emanuel were Russian roubles from the Secret Service Fund of the Third Section."

"Then the banker is a spy too," said the burly man. "Death to him."

"No," said the President, "I do not think so; although on this point Petronski can give us the information if he care to do so."

Petronski's reply was a grunt of disgust.

"Emanuel was the tool in the hands of the police, who made him their unconscious agent. He handed over the money to the representatives of our society without knowing what it really was for. You hear what I say," said the President to Petronski.

Petronski took no notice, but maintained a sullen, defiant attitude.

"If I am wrong, pray correct me," said the President. "Hertz, who received the money, was followed from place to place, and from some words or acts of his the plot of the tunnel was unearthed. Petronski was ignorant of it till Hertz had been watched. He knew some plot was brewing, but he did not know it was a mine."

"Was he cognisant," asked a lady, "of the person who supplied the money to the banker? Did he know that by watching Hertz dispose of the money, the secret would be revealed?"

"Yes," said the President. "You can ask Petronski himself if you will. He hears you and is sullen. There is one little matter I should like to mention to you, Petronski, as you are not aware of it, with all your cunning," said the President, addressing the spy.

"Better tell him, I think," said the German.

"Oh yes," said the same lady; "let him hear it all in case of a mistake."

"Where is No. 13?" said the President.

Petronski flinched and started. "You have No. 12. No. 13 was sent to you a week ago, and you have missed it."

Petronski, interested to a marked degree, struggled to release himself and get up.

"You may as well make him comfortable in a chair," said the President. "But bind his shoulders, as we don't want him to butt himself against the table, or give us trouble."

Several men proceeded to place him in an easy posture, and in a position so that all the company could see him.

"Now," said the President, "where is No. 13?"

Petronski turned a blood-shot eye towards the President, but still refused to speak.

"What is No. 13, Monsieur President?" asked a member.

"Marteau," said the President, addressing that individual, "you have a copy of No. 13 in your pocket, read it to the ladies and gentlemen, and the traitor."

"It was addressed to Petronski," said Marteau, "and these are the words which it contained."

"No. 13. All ready for 14th at every point. Want as many as possible. You had better leave as arranged, and go to Geneva. I rely on you to

instantly communicate any suspicion so we shall not lose. Otherwise for the 14th. Afterwards return to St. Petersburg. G."

"To-day is the 14th," said the President. "All is ready for the 14th, Petronski. You agree to that? The arrests were arranged for to-day, Petronski, were they not?"

No answer was elicited from the prisoner.

"Do you hear, Petronski?" said the German, as he gave Petronski a vicious shake. "All was ready for the 14th. Spy! Traitor!"

Petronski spat in his face.

"That is the answer," said the President; "are you all satisfied he is the traitor?"

"Yes," said all the members.

"One arrest," said the President, "was not calculated for on the 14th, and the Chief of the Dreaded Third Section forgot to include the name of Petronski. We have completed the list for him, and secured the spy. We managed to get No. 13, Petronski."

Petronski uttered the one word, "HOW?"

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Petronski left his apartments in the Graben, a week previously to the events recorded in the last two chapters, his rooms were left undisturbed by his landlord Swieten. Swieten, in the easy-going good-

humoured fashion of the Vienna citizens, did not trouble himself to touch the apartments until the next day. "Time enough by and by," said the mild citizen.

Before, however, he had begun to clean up the apartments in anticipation of their occupation by a fresh tenant, he was disturbed by a visit from Hertz. Hertz had returned to Vienna, and finding his former residence was let to somebody else, he thought it expedient to learn whether Swieten could give him accommodation at the house where Petronski stayed when they both were in the Austrian capital lately.

Consequently, Hertz drove to the Graben, and found Swieten, who not only was quite willing to accept him as a tenant, but could give him the same comfortable suite of apartments that his friend Petronski had occupied.

"That will do capitally," said Hertz.

"Your friend," said Swieten, "left the city yesterday, saying he was about to visit Venice for a few weeks."

"Did he?" replied Hertz. "It is unfortunate that I missed him. I had no idea he intended leaving Vienna so soon."

"Did he expect you back here?" asked Swieten.

"I don't think he did, because my own movements were uncertain at the time."

"So. Well, I suppose these apartments are all you require. I shall be downstairs if you want anything," said Swieten.

Hertz looked round the apartments to see if there was anything more he was likely to require before the landlord descended to the basement. Presently, propped up by the piano and wall and standing in a corner, he caught sight of his own gold-headed Malacca cane.

"Surely that is my cane," said he, as he walked over and took hold of the stick.

"Yes, that is your cane," said Swieten. "It was left here by Petronski. He said that if you called for it all right, but if you didn't then I could have it for myself. It has stood there since."

"Well," said Hertz, "that is very funny, leaving my cane here when he was not sure I should return. It was certainly taking a great liberty with my property. I was very much annoyed when I lost it, and I have hunted everywhere for it since. It was the gift of a friend and I would not lose it for any money."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Swieten.

"Yes, Petronski should have let me know of it."

"Probably he thought you would call for it," said Swieten.

"Perhaps so."

To Hertz's mind, however, the matter assumed another aspect. He could not understand Petronski giving his property away, even conditionally. He could not have anticipated his return a month afterwards. He might have suspected Hertz would

return to Vienna on his way back from Russia a fortnight before. But such a suspicion must have arisen from pure guess-work, because Hertz had no intention of returning to Vienna until three days previously. Not liking to make a confidant of Swieten, Hertz concealed his own suspicions and simply said: "Well, as I am here now I will take care of it."

"There was a letter came for Petronski to-day," said Swieten. "It was delayed in the post and now it has arrived too late for him. I thought of keeping it a week and then returning it if I did not hear of his new address."

"As a letter generally means business to travelling people, you had better let me see it," said Hertz.

"Certainly," said Swieten; "I will fetch it in a moment."

Swieten descended the stairs and brought back the letter. It bore the Russian post mark.

Hertz was more amazed than before. Perhaps Petronski had only intended to stay away a short time. His conduct was most peculiar, and considering he was a revolutionary, it was reckless. First he leaves a walking stick, which is an excellent means of identification, with a stranger; then he has letters sent to an address he has left. Hertz decided the letter must be kept from the postal authorities at all cost.

"I think, Swieten, I had better take charge of it

for him, as I am sure to meet him or learn his address very shortly. I can then send it on. It is very likely he anticipated this letter and also my return and would expect me to take care of it."

"Oh, very well," said the easy-going Swieten; "just as you like. As he left the cane for you he expected you would call here for it."

"Yes," said Hertz. "Now I may as well settle down in the rooms and attend to my toilet before I go out. If you can let me have a can of hot water, Swieten, I shall be much obliged."

Swieten brought a can of hot water.

"If you want anything else," said he, "ring the bell, I shall be at work below."

"Very good," said Hertz.

Left to his own meditations, Hertz's uneasiness increased. He could not realise the peculiar actions of Petronski. Some vague feelings of alarm took possession of him, which he could not account for.

He was aware that in all the movements of secret societies there is a fundamental principle they cannot ignore if they wish to avoid falling into a trap which may be set by their opponents. It is this. The slightest deviation from a pre-arranged signal is considered quite sufficient cause to disregard the signal *in toto*. Signals are often discovered by the enemy. The whole of a complicated signal is not so likely to be learnt by them as a part of one. Therefore a signal which does not follow the exact

order agreed upon, is not trustworthy. In fact, it is an indication that something is wrong. If the whole signal be learnt by an enemy and utilised by him, then disaster is inevitable. Safety consists in formulating a combined code of signals and distrusting the slightest alteration of any detail.

Although no signals had been agreed upon by Petronski and Hertz, yet the latter, viewing the irregular conduct of his colleague, believed some disaster was about to happen. The whole proceeding was too irregular for safety. He therefore had no hesitation in opening the letter for Petronski. He did not tear it open, but availed himself of the help of the hot water, and cunningly unstuck the envelope and withdrew the contents. His astonishment knew no bounds when he read the following communication, which was written on the paper.

"No. 13. All ready for 14th at every point. Want as many as possible. You had better leave as arranged and go to Geneva. I rely on you to instantly communicate any suspicion, so we shall not lose. Otherwise for the 14th. Afterwards return to St. Petersburg. G."

Hertz tingled all over with excitement. He felt his scalp thrill and shiver, and a cold vibrating motion ran down his spine.

The note was consistent with the communication of one conspirator with another, by word of mouth. But he very well knew that no conspirator in their

society would ever put such words on paper. Writing was never resorted to, if other means were available. The text of the epistle, too, showed that it would be of little value to a revolutionist, but would be of value to a police spy as an order to him. This view was strengthened by his knowledge that writing is the usual and only way in which the bulk of police work can be conducted. There was nothing very unusual in a police officer sending a written communication to a subordinate. Besides the presumed authenticity of the document was confirmed, because it bore upon its corner the number 13, which probably meant it was the 13th letter dealing with the business to which it related.

Hertz was too excited to decide upon a course of action. It was patent that the plot no longer remained a secret. Discovery had been effected, and a swarm of arrests would follow. What was he to do. To telegraph was out of the question. To write was dangerous, as it had been to the spy. To go to his comrades and give the alarm meant expenditure of time in one direction, and inactivity in every other. The greatest danger was in Russian territory. The next on the Austrian and Prussian frontiers where friendly governments would prevent the escape of fugitives. The Inner Circle in Paris would be able to evade arrest by dispersing and retiring into unnoticed retreats, could they be informed of the danger in time. To go to Paris was to leave

those in Russia to certain arrest. To go to Russia was to enter the lion's den—to step into a trap which very likely would close upon him. Still the point of greatest danger was in Russia, and to Russia this revolutionary intended to go. With those outside Russia he must run the risk of letters going astray, and send them written reports of the danger. The situation was critical.

The blood boiled in the veins of Hertz when he saw how easily he had been deceived, and how Petronski had learnt of the plot. He became so excited, that at one moment he contemplated tracking Petronski down, there and then, and letting his own friends fall into custody. But calming down slightly, he realised the madness of such an action. Petronski could wait. His colleagues in Russia must not be sacrificed. His common sense soon reasserted its supremacy, and he resolved to leave for Tver and Moscow, and deal with Petronski afterwards, if he could find him.

A difficulty arose about his landlord, Swieten. He must find some plausible excuse to give up the rooms when he had only been in possession of them a few hours. At length he thought out a plan of action. He would send two telegrams to himself from different parts of Vienna, urging his return home owing, say, to his warehouse having caught fire. That would be urgent enough, and feasible enough. One telegram following another would emphasise

its importance in the eyes of Swieten, who would not be aware that both were despatched within two miles of his own door. The telegrams must be sent to the care of Petronski, at Swieten's, The Graben, Vienna. He must play up to the landlord that he had left word that any letters were to be sent to Petronski's care until he had a definite address of his own in which to receive them.

Finally he must decide how to deal with the letter he had opened. To take it away would reveal to Petronski, in case he returned, that he was found out. That would facilitate his escape. Yet he would like to retain such an incontrovertible proof of treachery. Petronski would learn as soon as he received No. 14 that No. 13 had miscarried, and his first step would be to trace it. His most likely course would be to return to his apartments and see Swieten. Swieten, knowing nothing of the conspiracy, and caring nothing about their schemes, would tell the whole story and unconsciously acquaint Petronski that he was discovered. Consequently, the only way to lull suspicion was to close the letter again and leave it there for Petronski, when he returned to make enquiries about it.

Hertz, thereupon, sat down and made an exact copy of the letter, and put it in his pocket. Just as he was about to close the original envelope it occurred to him to hold up the paper to the light, and see the water mark on it. There he beheld, beautifully em-

bossed in the centre of the sheet, as a water mark, the imperial crown of Russia. He almost laughed as he looked at it. Had this simple means of identification occurred to him previously it would have saved him much logic to convince himself it was a true Government document sent to a spy.

"More police routine," he said to himself, as he leant back and burst out into a hoarse laugh, as the reaction of mental strain overcame him and brought on the inevitable symptom of mild hysteria. "They talk of habit being their greatest help in detecting crime, and here is evidence that they themselves are perfect slaves to the crudest routine. The chief of the Third Section writing a letter so worded as to be of little use to anyone but his correspondent, affixing no name, date, or address to it, and yet writing it on the water-marked Government paper of his office. It really is very ludicrous. It is very rich. Detectives brag that slight oversights sometimes doom the most elaborate schemes to failure. They should be very thankful that they do. And the Society International also feels very thankful to the detective police, that by a slight oversight on their part they have exposed their laborious machinations to capture a few revolutionaries. I rise and make an elaborate bow to you, Monsieur the Chief of the Third Section of Police, for your childish blunders. Folly is not all on one side."

And Hertz, still carried away by the mental reaction, rose and bowed time after time to the air.

He then skilfully reclosed the letter, and placed it on one side for Swieten.

Next he wrote three letters. Two to members of the Inner Circle in Paris, living in different postal districts. One to a revolutionary in Geneva. In these letters he briefly related that which he had discovered; told them he was going direct to Russia to their comrades, and asking them to take every step to facilitate the flight of the revolutionaries. He urged them at all cost to secure Petronski. If the writer escaped arrest he would meet them in Paris as soon as possible.

Having finished his writing, Hertz performed a speedy toilet, and went downstairs.

On the way out he encountered Swieten, and told him to retain any letters that came, as he had authorised his letters to be addressed to the care of Petronski until he knew where he would reside in Vienna.

At two telegraph offices far apart Hertz despatched his telegrams to himself at Swieten's. Then he visited a head post office, and posted his letters.

He leisurely returned to his apartments in the Graben.

He had not long to wait before Swieten brought him the first telegram, which he opened in the landlord's presence.

"From Petronski, I suppose?" said Swieten.

"No," replied Hertz. "This contains dreadful news. No sooner am I away than a great calamity

befalls me. My warehouse, built only three years ago, is in flames, through the carelessness of the engineer. Give me a glass of water, Swieten."

"Certainly," said Swieten, who hurriedly carried out the request.

"I wish Petronski were here to advise me."

"It is no good taking it so much to heart," said Swieten. "If it has been burnt down you can't undo it. Worse misfortunes at sea."

"Ah, but my large stock, my new designs, the latest stamping machinery, all, all gone."

"Well, others are to be bought, and as I say, it is no good crying over it now it is done," said the easy-going Austrian. "Best set to work and build it up again."

"Impossible," said Hertz. "I don't know what to do. I ought to go back, but I have two weeks' business here that must be attended to. If I wait a fortnight, it is very likely they will muddle it all up."

"That isn't likely," said Swieten, "all you have to do is to take things easy like. Better to do your business now you are here than to go away and come back again later on. That loses time and money."

"Perhaps you are right," said Hertz. "I think I had better stay, at least for a week. That may not make much difference."

The landlord departed and Hertz sat down to congratulate himself on the success of the first act. Two hours later, which is not very long in the

vagaries of telegram delivery, the second telegram was brought up by the landlord.

"Here is another one for you," said he.

"I hope it is no further misfortune," said Hertz, as he opened the envelope and read it. Then he announced with decision, "my return is imperative, the books were not in the safe and have all been burnt. I must go at once. Complications will arise which will necessitate my personal direction. I am very annoyed, as it makes it much worse, you see, Swieten."

"Yes, I suppose it does," said Swieten. "Then you have made up your mind to go?"

"I must, now this second telegram is so pressing."

"Very well, then," said the landlord; "shall I help you to pack up, or can you manage alone?"

"I can manage, thank you," said Hertz. "But if you wouldn't mind getting me some dinner whilst I am getting my things together, it would be of service to me."

"Just so," said the landlord, as he hurried away. "I will have something ready for you in twenty minutes."

Hertz hastily put his impedimenta together, carefully examined everywhere to see he had left no trace of his design, and in due course bade adieu to the Graben and sought the railway station *en route* for Vladimir."

CHAPTER XII.

CLANG, clang ; cling, clang ; reverberated the monastery bell of St. Vie, to the accompaniment of gusts of wind and showers of heavy rain which deluged the Rue de la Ferronnerie. The narrow street, at such an hour and in such a storm, was totally deserted save for the muffled up figure standing in the rain outside the monastery gates impatiently pulling the cast iron handle swinging from an iron rod which communicated with the sombre-toned bell within the court-yard.

Clang, clang, again and again rang the bell. Presently, in response, could be heard the sound of *sabots* echoing on the tiled floor of the cloister within. The wooden trap which closed the grille in the iron-studded heavy oaken door was slipped back and a face appeared behind the bars. The head was covered with a cowl and surrounded by a black woollen drape to keep off the bleak air of night. A voice from behind the wicket said :—

“Who seeks to disturb the peace at this unseemly hour ?”

“I seek Père Ambroise at once,” replied the man who rang the bell.

“My son, Père Ambroise has retired to his cell and cannot be disturbed at this hour.”

“He must be disturbed,” said the stranger, “a man is dying and prays for the last rites of Holy Church.”

“My son, seek ye someone else, Père Ambroise is old and his limbs are stiff with much tribulation, and to venture forth in such a night might be the death of him. *Dominus vobiscum.*”

“He must come with me, good Brother Porter, though the night be stormy and the rains pour in deluge as if the heavens would fall. He must come, for the safety of a soul makes me call him ere it be too late.”

“My son, is there no other confessor whom thou mightest seek with less jeopardy to priest of the Church?”

A blinding flash of lightning lit up the street and the pale face of the porter, and a terrific clap of thunder shook the earth as they conversed.

“The powers of heaven protest,” said the Brother Porter, as he devoutly crossed himself.

“The powers of heaven protest against delay, good Brother Porter. Pray seek Père Ambroise.”

“I dare not.”

“Brother Porter, I was sent in all urgency for Père Ambroise, for he who waits his coming, lies in the throes of death. He has much to confess for the good of his soul, and much that is for the benefit of Mother Church. Time is progressing, pray Brother Porter, of your charity seek Père Ambroise.”

“Wait then, my son, whilst I venture to disturb the repose of Père Ambroise. May the saints forgive me. *Dominus vobiscum.*”

The wicket closed with a snap, and the man outside turned away, shielding his face from the rain which dashed against it. "Cursed night," he muttered, "and 'tis only with great difficulty I can even get a priest to shrive him. If Père Ambroise come not outside the gate, then, by all that's holy, they shall not sleep one wink, for I never will let go my hold of the bell." He squared himself up to the storm, and walked thirty or forty yards down the narrow Rue de la Ferronnerie in the face of the biting wind. Then he put his fingers to his mouth and gave forth two shrill whistles, which defied the savage elements to drown them. He paused, then he repeated the whistles. Apparently satisfied by some sound he heard in reply, he gladly turned his back to the storm, and retraced his steps to the monastery wicket.

Ere long a heavy, broken down old *fiacre* rumbled over the cobbled road, and the driver drew up at the wicket gate.

"Is it well?" asked the *cocher* who drove.

"He will come, André," returned the stranger. "Mind not to let him see your face, as, though he be old, he may remember the marks of it."

"Bah," replied André.

"Well, be careful," rejoined the stranger; "we do not want any more trouble with this business."

"How much longer must we wait?" asked the *cocher*.

"Goodness knows ; I don't want to talk."

At length the sounds of feet approaching along the cloister drew the stranger back to the oaken wicket.

The panel slid back, and a voice came through the grille in the treble tones of a man past his prime and falling into desuetude. It was Brother Porter.

"Are you still there, my son?"

"Yes, Brother Porter," returned the stranger, "I am here."

"Who is with thee since I sought Père Ambroise and disturbed his rest?"

"'Tis only the *fiacre* and the *cocher* to drive it, good Brother Porter. Is it meet that Père Ambroise should face the storm and take chill, and his death burden the soul of the penitent? The *fiacre* will furnish some protection to the good father."

"True, my son ; true."

"Will Père Ambroise be long, good Brother Porter?"

"My son, Père Ambroise sends me to say he is infirm and in tribulation himself. He desires the name of the penitent who seeks his ministrations at this untimely hour of this stormy night."

"Say, then, good Brother Porter, that Louis de Vermont, of Gascony, who gave the new altar at St. Dominique, is in mortal peril. And, good Brother, be quick, or I shall be laid in sickness myself from this storm."

"Neither man nor beast should be out in it," replied the Brother Porter.

The monk again closed the wicket panel, and his *sabots* sounded as he clattered back along the cloister.

"Curses on his old head," said André; "why will he not come? What did he say, Marteau?"

"Hush! hush! André! why do you speak my name? You ought to have more sense than that. Is it not enough that I stand in this cursed storm and wait for the priest, without you shouting my name all over the city?"

"And don't I wait too?" replied André. "Is it you alone who brave the storm? Bah! man, we all wait. Well, what did the lazy prior say?"

"He is old and infirm, and requires to know who needs him at this hour," said Marteau.

"And you were fool enough to tell him?" enquired André, shortly, for the storm and delay made both men irate and ill-tempered.

"I told him Louis de Vermont, of Gascony, was at the point of death. Otherwise he would not come."

"May the devil fly away with him," returned André. "'Twill be morning before we have finished."

"Who else, then, could I say wanted him?"

"Nobody, but he will know," said André; "it cannot be Louis de Vermont, who has not been in Paris this twelvemonth."

"No matter," replied Marteau; "once let me get him here, I will manage that. He would not come else, André. I will say Louis has met with an accident."

"Bah!" replied André. "This delay and negotiation is dangerous. I would have none of it. Why tarry for this daddering prior?"

"'Tis better," said Marteau.

"And we must be gone from Paris before dawn," said André.

The wicket opened again and the feeble squeaky voice of Père Ambroise was heard from behind it.

"My son, is it Louis de Vermont, of Gascony, who would make confession and receive absolution?"

"Yes, father," returned the stranger.

"I thought he was in Gascony, my son. How cometh he here and in dire peril, needing to send a messenger at this hour of night?"

"Good father, an accident hath befallen him by the stud mare of Alphonse and his spine is crushed. He is even now in the throes of death."

"Where lieth he, my son?"

"At Maison de Leoron, by the quay. Be quick, father, lest it be too late."

"I come, my son; I come."

The wicket gate opened and the wind roared in gusts through it, sweeping in slanting sheets of rain. Père Ambroise, tightly drawing his robes round him and assisted by the stranger, tottered across the

pathway as quickly as he could and scrambled into the *fiacre*.

Marteau was about to mount the *coupé* by the side of André, when Père Ambroise called to him from the window.

"My son, it is not necessary to expose thyself to the inclement weather. There is room inside for both of us. Descend, my son, and enter."

"Thanks, father, I did not wish to intrude on your reverence."

The *cocher* whipped up the horse and the *fiacre* jolted over the roadway on its journey.

After the lapse of a considerable time, Père Ambroise broke the silence.

"My son, my eyes are dim with age and the storm prevents me seeing anything, yet it seems to me the *cocher* hath crossed the Rue St. Honore a while back and travels a very rough road. Hath he mistaken the road in the bad weather?"

"He knows the way, holy father. 'Tis the desolation and stormy night that makes it seem so far."

"Then he hath passed the quay, my son," said Père Ambroise. "The Maison de Leoron was close beside it. He hath lost the road."

"No, Père Ambroise."

"Whither, then, doth he journey? I know not the quarter we travel," and Père Ambroise peered through the window in the hope of recognising some street mark or other.

"My eyes are feeble and I cannot see."

"It is the Maison de Leoron of Madame Duchau, Père Ambroise, where Louis de Vermont lies sick. Not that of Madame Brissey."

"I know it not, then, my son. My bones ache with the jolting, and I fain would be there. Had'st thou not better have sought a father confessor near at hand?"

"He would not listen to such a proposition, Père Ambroise. We shall soon be there."

The *fiacre* shortly afterwards stopped in front of a mansion which, like others in the street, was shrouded in total darkness. Marteau alighted and ascended the steps. He struck two heavy blows upon the door in rapid succession.

"Who is there?" enquired a voice within.

"I," replied Marteau.

"Anyone with you?"

"One," replied Marteau.

"Then you had better come to-morrow," said the voice.

"Very well," said Marteau, and he knocked again twice.

"Why do you not go away?" said the voice within.

"I cannot delay," replied Marteau.

The door was opened, and a dull light cast its feeble rays across the intervening space. Père Ambroise, assisted by Marteau, hurried as much as

his great age would allow him across the path and into the hall of the mansion.

"Père Ambroise, a blessing;" said a beetle-browed, stern-visaged man, as he dropped on one knee before the prior and kissed his hand.

Père Ambroise gave him a blessing and then slipped into a side room.

"He who is dying," said the beetle-browed man, "begs you will confess him and administer the extreme unction of the Church."

"Take me to the penitent," replied Père Ambroise. "'Tis sad to think that he who was in health and vigour, and a good son of the Church so short a time ago, is suddenly stricken down."

"Very sad," replied the man. "Be pleased to follow me. I will light the way."

Père Ambroise was led along a bare passage with waxed floor, where every footstep echoed and re-echoed many times with a hollow sound. At the end of the passage was a flight of stone steps, which they descended, to another passage paved with concrete. The bearer of the lamp went first, Père Ambroise next, and Marteau brought up the rear. They came to another flight of steps and ascended them. Père Ambroise was assisted by Marteau. The trio journeyed along a corridor, and entered a room where the shutters were closed, and heavy curtains and drapery excluded even the noise of the storm without.

The feeble light of the lamp illuminated the chamber. On a trestle bed, with his back partly turned to the door, lay a man whose face was hidden by the clothes.

Père Ambroise approached.

"My son, Louis de Vermont, I grieve to see thee here. What sad misfortune hath befallen thee that thou needest the sacred office of our Church at such an hour?"

Père Ambroise placed his hand on the man's shoulder.

"Speak, my son. Art asleep?" and Pere Ambroise slowly pulled the man round towards him. "*Art dead*, Louis! what means this?"

Père Ambroise leaned over and uncovered the man's face.

"This is not Louis de Vermont," he said, rising as quickly as he could, and facing the other two men. "I came to give absolution to Louis de Vermont."

"Your pardon, Père Ambroise," said Marteau, while his companion fell on his knees before the prior. "It is not Louis de Vermont, but this man, who is about to die, who seeks your ministrations."

"Why hast thou deceived me, my son? What falsehoods are these? I abjure thee at once, confess! Beware how thou triflest with the Church. I understand not thy knavery or trickery."

"Père Ambroise," said Marteau, "this man begged for you, and knowing your age and infirmity, and

wishing to grant his last request, we adopted a ruse to bring you here, fearing you would refuse consolation to an entire stranger in such a night."

"I will not sanction any ruse, my sons. The Church cannot and shall not be deceived. Away from me. Stand aside. I depart again to my cell at St. Vie."

"Listen, father, ere you go. Listen, ere it be too late. *He is about to die*. Do not refuse him the rites of the last office he can have on earth. Now you are come, perform your office."

And Marteau straightened himself up in stern determination, and pointed to the bed.

"My son, the Church cannot be treated thus. Must not be deceived. Thou hast deceived me. Let the penitent seek some other confessor. I go hence."

"Père Ambroise," said Marteau, barring the way by maintaining his position; "consider what you do. Within the hour he is gone, and we cannot and will not get another prior for him. If you go, he dies without a priest."

The beetle-browed man, still upon his knee, addressing the priest said:

"Holy father, he speaks the truth. If you refuse, the sinner dies unshriven."

"My sons, such subterfuge I reject. There is no absolution where there is deceit, or without complete confession. Seek ye another."

"Père Ambroise," said the man on the bed, as he

twisted round slightly ; " I will make full confession ; complete confession to you if you desire it. These comrades do not deceive you. My end has come. Refuse me not your office."

Thou dost not look to be dying, my son. I distrust this strange action, this underhand work."

" Ask *him*, *he* is a surgeon," said the man on the bed, as he nodded towards Marteau, who, rigid and inflexible, stood in the same position he occupied when he admitted he had practised artifice to induce the prior to attend.

The prior turned and looked at both the kneeling man and at Marteau. Marteau spoke.

" Père, he is dying, and will not live the hour."

" What mortal complaint hath he, then?" asked Père Ambroise.

" Something internal," replied Marteau.

" My son, thou art a surgeon. Tell me the nature of this internal complaint. I would avoid more deception. Beware how thou triflest again with the Church."

" Père Ambroise, it is difficult, I cannot explain."

" My son, *thou must* explain, or I go hence. Thou hast doubly deceived me. Say at once the disease, or suffer the vengeance of the Church."

" Père, forgive me, I cannot."

" Then by bell, book and candle, shall I curse thee."

" Père Ambroise," replied Marteau, with hauteur and great dignity ; " your denunciations are inopera-

tive. They are futile. They have no power *over me at all. I do not belong to your religion.* My comrade who kneels *does.* *He* on the bed *also.* But I conjure you, as a *priest of their faith*, perform your office and have done with it."

Père Ambroise turned to the man on the trestle bed, and said :—

"Thou, my son, thou who seekest the comforts of Holy Church, explain this mystery, or I depart."

"Père Ambroise," said he on the bed, "I die of bleeding."

"My son, speakest thou the truth? To mine old eyes thou dost not look like one who is losing blood. Thou hast not the pallor of the skin, the colourless lips, the whiteness of eye, the blueness beneath it, nor the long sighing respirations."

"Nevertheless, 'tis true, Père Ambroise," said Marteau; "he dies of bleeding."

"My sons, I must see for myself." And Père Ambroise, with his feeble hands, pulled down the bed covering.

The man was bound, and fastened to the trestle bed by ropes.

"Hah! what means this?" said Père Ambroise. "A prisoner. About to die in the dead of night, when storms rage without, and no sounds can pass from within. When absolution has to be obtained by deception, and the extreme unction procured by fraud. Speak, I command you. What mean these cords?"

They were silent.

"Speak, or I condemn thee by all censures, and the curse of major excommunication. By the Holy Cross I raise above thine head, speak, I abjure thee, or receive my denunciation."

And Père Ambroise raised his feeble, bent frame to its greatest height, and his trembling hands held aloft an ebony and gold crucifix, which in the dim light of the chamber, hovered over them like an avenging scourge. The kneeling man trembled in fear, and his eyes remained rivetted on the cross.

"Speak at once," said Père Ambroise.

"Père Ambroise," said he on the bed, "it is decreed. There is no hope. They must not reveal, lest they, too, die as I die."

"What mean these cords?" said Père Ambroise.

"Père, they are not for sickness, and have nought to do with it. They are to prevent escape."

"What, then, is thy disease, if they have nought to do with it? Thou speakest in riddles."

"It is decreed, Père, by man, that it must be so."

"But not by God," said Père Ambroise. "It shall not be. This blood must stop. Thou who enticed me from my hallowed cell by deceit, and who callest thyself a surgeon, tell me whence flows this blood? Whose machinations encompassed it? Who hath done this mortal sin? The Church denounces it. Whence comes this flow?"

Marteau slipped his hand into his left breast pocket

and rapidly withdrew it. Before the eyes of the startled prior there shone the glittering blade of a keen amputating knife.

Père Ambroise drew back in instinctive horror. Then recovering himself, he said in the sternest voice his agitation could command—

“If by thy hand this man dieth, on thy soul be the guilt. Rise, ye companion of a foul murderer, kneel no more to me in thy degradation and thy shame.”

The kneeling man rose to his feet in sullen offence and somewhat abashed.

“Père Ambroise,” said Marteau, “the time passes. Two thousand francs are even now placed within the wicket of the Monastery of St. Vie for masses. *Do your duty*, or he die unshriven. On your head then be the sin. Meddle not with that which does not concern you.”

“My son, I cannot,” responded Père Ambroise.

“*I seek not your ministrations, Père Ambroise. 'Tis he who asks, not I. I want nought of you.*”

“That is so, Père Ambroise. Wilt thou refuse me the extreme unction and comfort of the Church when there is no other to give it?”

Père Ambroise stood irresolute.

“What sin hast thou committed to merit this?” asked Père Ambroise.

“Many, *père*, many. Hundreds now linger in the dungeons and vaults by my misdeeds. Dozens have

died a slow, lingering death. Hundreds have lived a life of torture, torn from those they held dear to them by my acts. I was caught, and by the decree of the Inner Circle, there is no escape."

"Still, I will not be a party to thy foul plots, thou assassin," said Père Ambroise, turning to the others and shaking his fist at them.

"*Père*," said he on the bed, "if you refuse me consolation it will not help me, but be worse for me. Consent, Père Ambroise, when fate decrees it."

"My son," said Père Ambroise, "let me commune. In five minutes I give my answer."

He moved over to a side table, bent his knees and was lost in prayer. When he rose again he feebly moved back to the bedside of the prisoner and said—

"My son, thou seekest to receive the extreme unction, the last rite of the Church for those in peril, believing thy last hour hath come?"

"Yes, *père*."

"I will hear thy confession, and give thee full absolution. By the same power do I curse thy assassins and call them to justice."

"Retire from this which is holy," continued he, turning to the two free men. "It is not right that thou shouldest pollute with thy presence or thy tainted company a holy ceremony. Begone, foul murderers!"

Marteau and his companion retired to the corridor, but left the door partly open so that they could see

that no attempt was made by the prior to release the prisoner. They were suspicious of him.

The prior then clothed himself in his vestments of office ; drew forth a snow white cloth from his cassock, and placed it on a table, stood the ebony and gold crucifix in the centre of it, and lit two candles, which he placed by the side of the crucifix. Then, from his pocket, he produced a small, deeply-chased silver cup and stood it on the cloth. He half filled the cup with oil he had brought with him. He sank on his knees before the altar.

Père Ambroise repeated many prayers. Listened to the confession of the penitent. Gave him absolution, and then proceeded to anoint him with holy oil. Having dipped his fingers in the silver cup, he touched the eyes, ears, nostrils, lips, hands and feet, of the man with them. Then he repeated many more prayers and was finished.

* * * * *

" This way, Père Ambroise," said Marteau, as he led the way along a passage, and was about to take hold of the priest's cassock to guide him.

" Hands off!" cried Père Ambroise. " Touch not the sacred cloth of a priest with thy guilty fingers. Lead on, I will follow. Speak not to me, and touch not my robe."

They wended their way back to the door through which they had entered from the street. The sound

of the horse of the *fiacre*, stamping his hoof, mingled with the storm.

“Père Ambroise,” said Marteau, placing his back against the door, “we have been obliged to let you into one of our secrets in order to administer your office to him who is a spy. We must take precautions that you do not recognise the house you have been to, nor the way hither.”

“My son, my eyes are too dim to note much. I will not tolerate more deceit ; nor yet indignity.”

“*Père*, our safety depends on seclusion ; we cannot let you return in a way that might give you any trace of the route. You perhaps will submit to be blind-folded.”

“My son,” replied Père Ambroise, trembling violently with anger and weakness, “beware how you offer insult to a priest of Holy Church ! Dare to lay a hand on me, and forget I am a priest and an old man, and thou art a vile assassin as yet unpunished !”

Père, the safety of us all demands secrecy. We do not wish to offer the least indignity to you or your office ; but we are not going to allow you to have us tracked.”

“Then cease thy discord and blabber,” said Père Ambroise, “for I go hence unblinded and untouched. I go hence a free man, as I came a free man, though induced to do so by fraud.”

“One moment, Père Ambroise, whilst I consult

my comrade." He spoke in low tones to his comrade, and after considerable discussion, he again addressed the prior.

"Père Ambroise, as a man of honour, and as a prior, I pray you give us your word that you will close your eyes in the *fiacre* and not open them until it stops at the Monastery of St. Vie."

"Why, my son?" asked Père Ambroise.

"That you may not in any way be able to learn the direction you have come, That you may not have to hide anything, as you will not know it."

Père Ambroise considered a moment, and then said, "Very well, my son, I consent. I pledge my word."

"One more promise, Père Ambroise."

"What is it, my son?"

"That you will make no noise and give no sign of being in the *fiacre* till the door is opened for you to alight at the wicket gate."

"So be it, my son," said Père Ambroise.

"Père Ambroise," said Marteau, "on the sanctity of your office we rely."

He opened the door.

"Thy monstrous acts will yet be avenged," said the prior as he descended the steps, took his seat in the *fiacre* and closed his eyes.

The *fiacre* door slammed, the beetle-browed man took a seat on the *coupé* beside André, and the *fiacre* rumbled off through the still raging storm back again to the gates of the Monastery of St. Vie in the Rue de la Ferronnerie.

Père Ambroise stood within the monastery cloister and heard from the Brother Porter that two thousand francs had been left at the wicket a short time before his return. Then Père Ambroise returned to his cell.

CHAPTER XIII.

“CAPTAIN d’Everell in?”

“Yes, Monsieur, the prefect is in his office,” replied the *gendarme* on duty at the door of the prefecture.

It was Marteau who enquired. He wore an imperial and was disproportionately older in appearance than he was in years; heavier in body, stouter and more firmly set. His frame had lost some of its former suppleness but none of its strength. With a jaunty step he walked into the Prefecture of Police and entered the sanctum of the prefect of police.

“How are you, d’Everell? Still toiling to keep an iron grip on the district of the Seine, I suppose. Aye? Those malefactors must curse the name of d’Everell morning, noon and night. Don’t you think they ought to?”

“How dy’e do, Marteau, sit down. I am studying out a most important communication that will put 100,000 francs into my pocket if I can work it out to a successful issue. But there, never mind; it can wait till I have a little more leisure.”

"Don't let me disturb you, d'Everell."

"It doesn't matter very much. What about our unfinished game of chess? I have you beautifully there, without any hope of escape. Say at once you retire. Throw up the game."

"No, no," replied Marteau; "I have calculated it to seven moves, and by the sacrifice of a piece to clear the way, I can yet beat you."

"You think so? Have a cigarette?"

"Thanks. Sacrifice of a piece and I beat you."

"You always were a queer fellow, Marteau," said the prefect as he swung his chair round and faced Marteau. "I never thought you would stick to the medical profession in the old days."

"Why not?"

"It didn't offer enough scope for your versatile and volatile abilities."

"They weren't volatile affections," said Marteau, in a good-natured but cutting manner.

"No, I can't say they were. Still you ought to have entered one of the professions whether you had any interest in it or not."

"It was immaterial to me, I had no occasion to rely on a profession as a means of living, so I think I was just as well out of it."

"I know. But the sweeping extent of the education is always of value. It comes in everywhere."

"Well, if it comes to that, I still retain a fair amount. The botany, comparative anatomy, statics,

hydrostatics, pneumatics, *et cetera*, have pretty well taken flight, but many other subjects are still fresh in my memory, and are of service to me."

"You should have completed the curriculum and qualified."

"Completed the curriculum and qualified? Oh, it doesn't matter, we had a rattling good time while it lasted. And you, *mon Dieu*, with the cosmetique stiffened moustaches sticking out fiercely on each side and as black as your hat. Your coat cut to emphasise the swagger, and make you as big a dandy as ever strolled down Bond Street. Not a grey hair in the moustaches then, d'Everell. No crow's-feet under the eyes, and the eye itself was of a roving nature, not the stern, unflinching investigator it is now; oh no. The la-de-da officer of French Cuirassiers, who had resigned his commission, became a man about town, with, above all things in the world, a wicked eye for a trim ankle. You were slightly racketty, d'Everell."

"It's a long time ago, Marteau."

"I should say so. Shows the alteration of habit and inclination by lapse of time, doesn't it? *Sacré*, there used to be some funny tales about you in the clubs, d'Everell."

"Mostly lies, Marteau, mostly lies. And one of the biggest of the assortment in circulation that I heard of led the minister to ask me to accept the post of prefect of police in this department. That was strange, wasn't it?"

"Why did you accept it, though?"

"I rather tired of doing nothing, and this division in particular had many attractions to a man of my temperament. It wanted a firm hand, and contained a lot of foreigners, who required a man used to foreign ways to watch them properly. So I accepted the appointment, and here I continue."

"Still following them up, then?"

"Yes, like a blood hound. If they settle in this division they can hide nothing from me. By the by, you might be able to throw some light on this matter, which is engaging my attention at the present moment. Mind, I must have your word that anything you hear does not go beyond ourselves. That is imperative."

"Certainly. I listen in confidence."

"Well, the Russian Government obtained news that a deeply laid plot was in existence to wreck a train in which the Tzar and suite would travel to the review in September. A charge of fifty pounds of dynamite would have blown bridge, train, and everything to smithereens. The tunnel was bored, the mine laid, and everything was in readiness. It must have taken six months to have driven through the earth right up to the bridge. Still they accomplished it. How such an extensive undertaking could have been carried out in secret for nearly five months is not yet quite clear to the authorities. Just at the moment when the plot would have pro-

bably succeeded, the Third Section heard something indefinite. A mere chance arrest in a village kabak led them to suspect that a secret society was organising an outrage of some kind. Without a spy who would carry his life in his hands, and go into the society, and dive into the intricacies of their plans, they were nonplussed. They could only find one man willing to lend his aid in such a desperate venture. His name was Peter Petronski. He had already rendered good service to the Government, but was rather unwilling to undertake this hazardous enterprise. They offered him a large sum of money, and a high official position if successful. Still he demurred. They furnished him with all the particulars they possessed, and a rough description of those who were believed to be mixed up in it. Then he suddenly changed his mind, consented to everything they proposed, and did his very best to work further into the confidences of the revolutionaries, find out what they meditated, and betray them regularly to head quarters."

"A low scoundrel," said Marteau, with savage ferocity. "A vagabond. There must have been a woman in it."

"Possibly," replied Captain d'Everell, with easy grace; "*but* he was necessary. One cannot choose the tools for dirty work, and it was of the utmost moment to learn the intentions of the revolutionists. Petronski had no feeling of honour in any shape or

way, and was probably actuated by the greed of money and the love of power. Anyhow he was entrusted with the dirty job. He gained the confidence of the revolutionaries by taking to them news of several domiciliary visits which were about to be made. Being more and more trusted by them he gleaned a lot of information about the new organisation."

"Then he knew they were tunnelling all the while?" said Marteau.

"No, that is the mystery. Whilst he knew most of their plots and sent on every scrap of their proceeding to the bureau of the Third Section, he was kept in ignorance of this one move for a long time."

"Why?"

"It is surmised that a woman, who was an active propagandist, from some strange prejudice she entertained, took a violent dislike to a man she had never seen. She was so vehement in her distrust that Petronski was kept in ignorance of the plot till nearly the last; then he was told of it by his own police. It was solely due to her antipathy that he was discredited. But there, Marteau, you know women's prejudices and likes are passionate fancies, and never based on reason or judgment."

"It is rather peculiar, though," said Marteau, "that *she should never have met him*, and yet hated him so much."

"Not altogether, Marteau, for this reason. These

disciples of revolutionary doctrine have to judge *from a distance* if they judge at all. Their societies have branches scattered over an immense area of country. Communication between ramifications is risky and occupies a lot of time. Visitations from one branch to another are attended with much greater risk. To travel through Russia, even with an authenticated passport, lays one open to all sorts of chance discovery. The slightest peculiarity in travel or conduct excites suspicion, suspicion leads to arrest and discovery. Arrest rarely ceases with the individual in custody, but often means the capture of all connected with a branch."

"I see," said Marteau, "go on."

"Therefore communications by letter or person are never undertaken, except on the most important matters. To this must be added the impossibility of directing the details of a campaign from a centre hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of miles away. Those on the spot must have complete control of all the arrangements and details. Schemes at a moment's notice often have to be totally abandoned and re-organised, and this would be impossible from a distance. The central body may suggest, help, and know that such and such an act will occur. Exactly when, how, or who will do it, they learn after its accomplishment. The danger of premature discovery increases in proportion to the number of conspirators."

"I am following the reasoning, d'Everell."

"Ah, but you don't know the ins and outs of these schemers like I do, my dear fellow," said the Captain.

"*Perhaps not*, but at any rate this woman's distrust saved the conspirators," said Marteau.

"Yes," continued the Captain, "as soon as ever Petronski knew they wanted more money he set to work to provide it and trace the recipient. The Third Section of Police were aware of his plan and the spy's prestige with the Government rose like a balloon. The police in their turn unearthed the plot itself, and told him when and where it was to take effect. The Third Section could have swooped down then and there on those in Russian territory, and taken the whole crew red-handed; but Petronski urged delay till other conspirators could be enticed into the kingdom. This *rusé* was so far successful that the woman and two men actually went to St. Petersburg and lived under the very noses of the dreaded Third Section for nearly a month. He was very cunning. Petronski shifted his quarters to Geneva and from there he advised that no further delay should ensue, as it was doubtful whether a greater number could be enticed over the frontier."

"A deep, scheming scoundrel of the first water," said Marteau.

"Arrests were to be made on the fourteenth. On the thirteenth, however, the woman and two men hurriedly left St. Petersburg. When the officers of

the Third Section paid a domiciliary visit the birds had flown. Their apartments bore evidence of hasty flight. Papers had been recently burnt in the stove, drawers were turned out, and the place upset. The second detachment of police simultaneously entered the tunnel of the mine. It was deserted. The house from which the driving had been made bore no sign of evacuation, so it was again placed under supervision for weeks, but no one ever visited it afterwards."

"Then they were completely baffled," said Marteau. "They must have been wild."

"Just so," continued the prefect, "they were. But the strangest part of the whole affair is that Peter Petronski disappeared from Geneva at the same time and has never been heard from since."

"Good gracious! Slipped back into safe quarters in Russia, or perhaps turned traitor on his former friends. A dog like that would do anything."

"So he might, Marteau," but the authorities do not credit it. He was deeply in the confidence of the Government, had rendered them valuable aid, and his service was so much esteemed that no stone was left unturned to find him. Every search was made. He had everything to gain and nought to lose by declaring himself to the authorities. A brilliant career was his reward. Unearthing that one desperate plot made him the confidential agent of the Tzar. Though a spy, his future was assured."

"I can quite credit that," said Marteau. "What became of the *escapées*?"

"The police made desperate efforts to trace them. The fugitives had eight hours' start and were traced from place to place, and almost caught up with once or twice. But their irregular flight, first to the busy towns and highways, and then through outlying villages, where strangers rarely go, was so erratic that they evaded the *gendarmes* waiting at several points to intercept them. They were tracked over the Austrian frontier, and then, I am sorry to relate, being in foreign territory, the trail was difficult to follow and they disappeared; no one knows where."

"It is really very interesting," said Marteau; "but where do you come in; what have you to do with it in Paris, in the Department of the Seine, in the Prefecture of Police, my dear old cavalry officer?"

"A great deal, now the information is officially furnished me, and a hundred thousand francs is the prize for success. Peter Petronski stands high in favour, and money will flow like water to find him. The service he has rendered by revealing the railway plot entitles him to the special gratitude of the Autocrat. News reached the Third Section that people answering the description of the fugitives were actually seen in Paris, and what is more, in this division of it. The Russian ambassador to our Government flew to our minister, furnished every detail, and offered one hundred thousand francs for

their arrest. The minister, wishing to propitiate the ambassador, and as a stroke of diplomacy, has given instructions that strict search is to be made."

"I see; and pray what is the description of these interesting fugitives, d'Everell?"

"One of unknown nationality is a fluent linguist," replied the prefect, as he took up the papers and read extracts from them; "medium build, height five feet nine inches, dark brown hair, whiskers trimmed very close, as if of recent growth, but the beard and moustaches are long; eyebrows bushy, eyes full, light brown colour."

"That was the spy, then?" asked Marteau, most complacently.

"Oh, no; that was a revolutionist. If here in Paris, he has probably shaved off the whiskers and left the beard and moustaches, so as to be in the fashion, with an imperial. The spy was taller by one inch; a narrow-chested man, with round shoulders; generally stoops, thereby reducing his stature about two inches. Nationality Russian. Very white face, small steel-blue eyes, furtive glance. Beard close cut and almost black; ears large and projecting; eyebrows sparse."

"Delightful description of a traitor. And the lady who eluded them, d'Everell, what was this charmer like, I wonder? I suppose you can give her description without reference to the official report?"

"Well, not quite, I have not yet mastered the

details. But here they are. As much as would interest you. She is a brunette, that's the first item."

"That's nice," said Marteau, "I like brunettes."

"Middle-aged, but could easily make up much younger."

"Which means she will pass herself off as eighteen," said Marteau, "if years have not given her sense."

"Dark flashing eyes, clear-cut eyebrows."

"Let us compose a sonnet to them," said Marteau. "Beautiful eyes, flashing and dark! How's that?"

"About five feet five in height; well developed; upright and extremely graceful; in repose her features wear an expression of pain; ears small, deeply cut; nose straight, rather small; teeth white and regular; hair in great profusion and almost black. Probably Russian nationality. Has a habit of moving her hands about when speaking, hands small."

"Oh," said Marteau, "that really completes a very pretty picture, to be sure. How I should like to kiss those hands."

"And one hundred thousand francs to me when I lay my own hands on them," replied the prefect, as he slapped the papers down on the secretaire and looked across at Marteau; "besides considerable kudos. If they be together anywhere in my division I will certainly have them. I have the best set of men in the whole *gendarmie*."

"Yes," drawled Marteau, "I suppose that villainous spy would be worth catching. The scoundrel! The hound!"

"Any of them would. They are not likely to be together, though," said the prefect, "unless they are in Paris."

"Why not?"

"Because the men and women must have been alarmed, otherwise they would not have left the capital in such a hurry. Once over the border they would immediately scatter, so as to be less conspicuous. When they were alarmed it is quite possible their informant was able to point out that treachery existed in their midst. Therefore they would have avoided those they were suspicious of, and the spy was never trusted by the woman, so they would have kept as far away from him as possible."

"Yes," said Marteau, "but if they suspected that, they may have gone straight to Geneva where he was and had it out with him."

"And then by diverse routes meet again in Paris you mean?" asked d'Everell.

"Yes."

"But the report does not suggest that. It says Spy Petronski was seen, or was believed to have been seen, walking near the Palais de l'Institut alone."

"Oh, well, that alters the affair. They all came on singly then to the gay Paris?"

"That does not follow either," said the prefect. "If they had come here singly and Petronski had been in the city for even a short time alone, he would in some way have quickly informed the Russian ambassador, or his home Government, that he was in Paris, and receive news of all that was transpiring in St. Petersburg. If he came alone he could easily do this. The party of three would again unite in Paris, but would keep far away from Petronski provided he followed them or came on independently. Yet it seems to me the spy could not be alone here."

"Perhaps so," said Marteau.

"If the spy were here, I cannot understand that he did not report himself. He must be kept informed from head-quarters of everything in rapid movements. Otherwise, he wastes time collecting stale news which is useless to his superiors."

"But you say the fugitives were seen, and the spy was seen in a different place and alone."

"Just so. The fugitives once over the frontier scattered and met again in Paris. The spy left Geneva and also came to Paris. That's what it comes to. The silence of the spy as soon as the fugitives left St. Petersburg I don't understand. There is the mystery."

"You don't think he joined them here?"

"If he joined them and did not report that means he was not acting spy for a time. If he were still

acting spy he would report to his chief. Now the question is, where is he, and why has he kept quiet?"

"Perhaps that voluminous report can give the information," said Marteau.

Captain d'Everell referred to the papers again, and then turning them on one side he said, "It seems the man has an alias."

"Oh! what is it?" asked Marteau in surprise.

"Autonoff," said Captain d'Everell.

"*Autonoff, Autonoff!*" shouted Marteau, jumping to his feet in an instant in the greatest excitement. "*Never!* look again, you must be mistaken," and Marteau, beside himself with excitement, dashed over to the papers which the prefect still held, to look at them for himself. "Let me see, point it out quickly!"

The prefect pointed to the name Autonoff on the documents, and said:—

"Yes, that certainly is his other name. But what is all the excitement about? Do you know him? Can you assist me to lay hands on him?"

"Blind fool that I have been," cried Marteau, disregarding the question, and walking up and down the room with rapid strides. "I never thought of it before. *Petronski was Autonoff.*"

"Well, what then? What does it all mean?" asked Captain d'Everell, catching some of Marteau's excitement, without being aware of it. "Whatever is the matter, Marteau? There must be something very dreadful in this."

Then the prefect himself was seized with frenzy, and in an instant was on his feet too, as greatly excited as Marteau. Both men stared at each other, and d'Everell said :—

“So that was the villain, was it? He has sent dozens of innocent people to rot in prisons. He is as big a scoundrel as their vile system of subservient autocracy ever produced to pander to an autocrat.”

“Yes, the foul traitor and spy!” shrieked Marteau. “He has wrecked the most innocent people by means of the fear of the Tzar, and he has brought misery to many families.”

Captain d'Everell sat down in deep thought. After a few minutes' silence he suddenly looked up and said :—

“Who was *the woman*, who escaped with two men from St. Petersburg, Marteau; tell me; surely not *Madame Zuroff*. *You don't mean that?*”

“Yes, d'Everell, it was she.”

“And *I was trying to arrest her*.”

“Yes, I know it, my friend.”

“And her companions?” asked the prefect.

“*I am one of them*,” replied Marteau, in dogged desperation, as he faced his friend.

The prefect turned deadly pale. He seemed overcome with emotion. “Marteau, Marteau, I never thought it.”

“We have all been blind,” said Marteau.

“No, not you,” said the prefect.

"Yes, I was blind," said Marteau. "I never thought of Petronski as the man who, repelled in an infamous proposal, consigned Madame Zuroff's husband, an innocent man, to a dungeon in the fortress of Peter and Paul."

"I know now, I see it all," moaned the prefect, as his head fell forwards on the bureau.

"Whether Zuroff lingers out the rest of his life in silence in the darkness of the dungeons of Bastion Trubetskoi, or whether he will die of paralysis in the quick-silver mines of Siberia we shall never know."

"Never," said the prefect.

"D'Everell," said Marteau, "I have done with it. I am your prisoner. Call in the *gendarmes* and send me to the cells."

And Marteau threw himself into a chair in resignation.

"I can't," whispered the prefect in a hoarse voice. "Marteau, 'tis more than *I can do*."

"D'Everell," said Marteau, "one favour I want of you, and one only. As my friend of years I want you to grant it. It is the last I can ever ask of you."

"What is it?" asked the prefect, in a low tone; torn between the claims of friendship and the sense of duty.

"A neglect of duty," whispered Marteau.

"What—what?"

"There is one noble and virtuous woman in this city who has always been an idol of goodness and purity in my sight."

"And also in mine," said the prefect.

"Yours!" exclaimed Marteau.

"Yes! in mine. I knew her heroism long before you did; from the first, and I honoured it."

"D'Everell, give her till sunrise to fly. She can do it. That is all I want of you, my friend."

Captain d'Everell shook with intense emotion.

"Only till sunrise, d'Everell; for that poor woman who has borne up against such infamy."

"*Till sunrise*, then, Marteau. Who can tell her?"

"Break your allegiance, neglect your duty, d'Everell, and give me two hours to tell her, and I will do it."

"Go," said the prefect, as he pointed to the door.

Marteau slowly rose, took his hat, and walked towards the door.

"Marteau, Marteau," said d'Everell; "come here."

Marteau came back.

"The others. What of them. My trust should be sacred. I never thought that *I*, a man of honour, *must flinch* for a moment."

"There is only I, d'Everell. My comrade is gone. Madame Zuroff will have gone. I am the only one left, and I return to custody in two hours from now."

"You the only one."

"Yes."

"But Autonoff, where is he? I will deal with him. Tell me, and *you are free*. *Quick*." And the prefect jumped up and gripped Marteau in a grasp of iron.

"I will clutch him by the throat, and never release

my grip as long as he lives." And the prefect shook Marteau as only a strong madman in his frenzy could shake a stripling.

"D'Everell, you are too late. He has gone."

"Escaped me; no, he shall not. Tell me where. I will follow him to the end of the world!" and the prefect released his hold for a moment.

"He has escaped you, d'Everell."

"How?" asked the prefect, sharply.

"By this of mine," cried Marteau, and he drew the shining, amputating knife from his breast, and held it before the prefect's eyes.

"Thank God the traitor is dead. The tragedy is complete."

THE ORIGIN OF MAN, THE FIRST ADAM.

HIS SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

Homo Hominum.

EVERYBODY now knows that great changes have taken place in the structure and physical condition of the earth. Geology is the science which teaches it. But everybody does not know that which all scientific men are aware of, that similar great changes have taken place in the structure and physical condition of all life upon the earth. Evolution is the science which teaches this. The changes have chiefly resulted from the cooling down of the earth from a nebulous mass to its present state. All living matter has been obliged to alter concurrently with the changes of the earth, or become extinct. Relics of extinct animals are monuments of irrefutable evidence of changed environment, of altered surrounding influences. Darwin and Wallace followed Wells and Matthew, who taught that as changes occurred in the world only those animals fitted to adapt themselves to the new circumstances of existence could possibly live in the new conditions. Generation after generation they had to keep step with earth changes, or else suffer extinction. Darwin said that those individuals who could adapt themselves to terrestrial transformations were the fittest

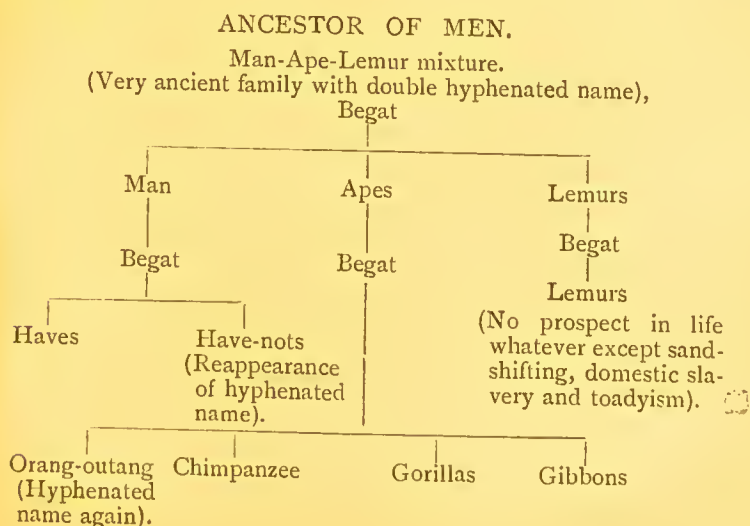
to survive. All others went to the wall. Every museum shows specimens of skeletons of life which is now extinct. The whole universe bends to the unconquerable law of change—perpetual—ceaseless—eternal change. Our little world is no exception to the rule. The means ordained to effect vast changes in our planet and all life upon it is the perpetual process of loss of heat ; gradual cooling down of our planet. When it had cooled to the state of a steaming mud, animal life on it necessarily had to be of the reptilian or creeping order, able by their morphosis to perambulate as an alligator does now, from swamp to swamp. Then the process of cooling continuing, dry land appeared, and land and water were fairly distinct from each other. Animals unable to procreate a progeny capable of changing with the changed condition of the earth, became members of an extinct species. Skeletons of these old conservatives have been preserved by Nature as instructors to us in our abyssmal ignorance and lack of logic. Proceeding in this way it only became a matter of time when the earth would be cool enough and suitable for men and monkeys. They both were evolved from some pre-existing animals. Professor Haeckel has demonstrated that recent fossil remains unearthed in Java, clearly prove that men and apes and lemurs are descended from a common animal ancestor. These are proofs which cannot be challenged by the unbeliever. Naturalists, zoologists

and other scientists knew that men and monkeys came from a common stem, but were severally envolved under somewhat different conditions. The recent fossil remains were interred during the geological tertiary period of the world's history. That is the earliest record of human remains. Possibly some people hope to find human records in the secondary or reptilian age, the age of alligators and crawlers. Others in a delirium think man might have existed in an earlier period, say the carboniferous age, when coal was formed. But this could not have been. The earth was too hot and too moist for man at that era.

In the tertiary age, however, the ancestors of mankind and monkey kind gave origin to three different races. They were men, apes, and the half apes called lemurs. The world was fit for them to live upon and unfit for their ancestors to live on. The common ancestor was capable of producing all three. A stem inversely hybrid. A mixture of young man shoots and monkey blossoms in the form of a monkey man. The immediate parents of the first man were only a very little inferior to man. They stood on one side of a line of demarcation, and man stood on the other side of it. The monkeys contemporary with man were also ranged below the line, like elder and younger sons in the nobility of the empire. Of all the monkey tribe, the anthropoid ape most resembles man, and really is not so much

below the lowest type of human beings. The nineteenth century anthropoid ape is like the younger son in the family—very nearly but not quite as good as his elder brother, who calls himself a man.

Look at the *physique* and habits and intellect of an aboriginal Patagonian. Surely it is preferable to be a respectable married ape to a Patagonian! The higher classes of apes are not at all bad-looking, either. A good tailor and barber might tog some of them up to look fit and proper persons to represent the free and enlightened parliamentary electors in a National Assembly. No doubt it is horrible to have to admit that lemurs, who are mostly nocturnal beasts, belong to our family; but there is no help for it, no matter how vain or conceited we may be. By the aid of fancy the genealogical tree is sketched like this:—



The reappearance of the hyphenated name after its suppression for a time, makes the literary tree which I have grown in this essay, correspond with a feature in natural history, of which the tree is a paper likeness.

The feature in natural history is called Atavism. The word signifies the re-appearance in offspring of some lost shape, or form, or organ, that was essential or pronounced in ancestors ages before its reappearance in the progeny.

But to continue the discourse :—

The three branches undoubtedly and surely sprang into existence from a common stock. The different branches of the family have continued to develop and alter in many ways—according to surrounding circumstances. Some monkeys prefer eggs, insects, and scorpions as their diet. There is hope for those monkeys to evolve themselves yet. Other apes live mostly on fruit, nuts, young shoots and vegetables, and therefore they can never hope to be real men.

People, as a body, require a fair proportion of animal diet. The profound prescience of man's ancestors was based upon chops and steaks, not tarts and chocolate creams.

I can imagine the time when the immediate ancestors of man—the father and mother of the first man—saw their chance, gave up eating fruit and swore off vegetarian foods. The time when they realised that an omnivorous diet was far superior to

any other ; when they honestly tucked into everything ; when they knew that meat, eggs, poultry, and fish, let alone oysters, were very desirable ; when they turned up their ancestral probosces in derision at the sickly beings around them who were destined to extinction because they tried to live on sevenpence halfpenny a day, and spent that money in lentils and horse beans.

Why, even to-day the second generation of vegetarian fanatics in England admit and declare that vegetarianism is quite unsuited to a healthy condition of a second generation, and that the higher aspirations of man cannot be supported upon a diet of greens and carrots.

The immediate ancestor of man is therefore proved to have been as clever in his discrimination as the present vegetarian man is. The immediate ancestors did not have the advantage of thousands of years of accumulated study and investigation to assist them. They were placed at a disadvantage.

Still, that grand old *pater* and that grand old *mater*, the immediate ancestors, must have been real genii. They couldn't have passed the junior public school examination, but they knew how to establish a race of men upon a permanent footing.

Probably the first man's father and mother held serious family confabulation, and came to the conclusion that fruit must go and dinners be mostly of easily-digested meats. That would effect a great

change in the breed. Then, I fancy, they had a hearty meal of flesh, and picked the bones of young birds. Finally, over a cigar and coffee, they declared that spring chicken was the greatest delicacy of all. I agree. They must have been considerably astounded, though, at the result of the change of diet, as they reared up the first man of the human race. What must they have thought of such a strange son? Morning, noon, and night, when not singing the praises of spring chicken, they must have lauded the grandeur and magnificence of their progeny. What pride must have filled their breasts when their son once and for ever discarded the ancestral trait of roosting in an arboreal habitation, and assumed the attitude of a pianist at play, or a typewriter at work. Hundred words a minute. All these capabilities were dormant in the first man, waiting for a chance and change of earth conditions to develop themselves.

There are no photographs of the immediate ancestors of man at the time they saw that his big toe was no longer a thumb, in opposition to the fingers of a hand, but was a real toe, fit and suitable to stand upon, and henceforth and for ever useless for monkey tricks.

"There," said the first man's pa to the first man's ma, "that is something like a toe; he can have real, genuine, aristocratic gout in that, and no mistake. There isn't a toe like that in any part of creation, except on our boy."

No one can controvert the adamantine truth that there was a first man.

We are living witnesses to the truth of it.

Science and superstition differ in his pedigree. I am seriously inclined to think there must have been a first woman, too, with whom he knocked about. But let her go ; for in imagination I can see the first man in all his glory when, laying claim to his hereditary patrimony, he reached man's estate. It was an historical moment when the first man recognised that he really was a man, and no longer a dirty monkey.

Knowing the physical condition of the earth at the time, the geography of the locality and the essential features of his surroundings, it is not so very difficult to picture the first man himself.

The earth was much hotter then. The poles were not frozen over. The tropics were rather too warm for him ; therefore he lived nearer one of the poles than the equator. Possibly he spent his summer holiday touring up the north pole or sliding down the south. Thus is his habitat established. Then what was he like ? Why like this—

He had a receding forehead ; his nose lacked a decent bridge ; his cheek bones were prominent ; his upper jaw was large and protruding ; his mouth equally large, very large, very large, indeed. His teeth knew no decay ; they were beautifully arranged and symmetrical, and the same in number and shape

as a full set of ours. By the way, all the other apes have the same variety and number of teeth as our most beautiful women have. It can't be helped.

I'm sorry for our Society beauties, but as they have descended, like the ugliest of us, from the immediate ancestor, they must forget the little degradation.

The first man was not over-dressed.

Considering the temperature was about 180° Fahr. in the shade, it is only rational to infer that hair was superfluous, and hence the first man was bald all over. The sun's rays bronzed him in spite of the lime-juice and cucumber the first woman poured over his complexion to make it look nice. He was a darkey; his weight and size were dependent upon his diet when a boy. As his parents discarded fruit and became omnivorous, it must be inferred that the first man, when he was a boy, was well fed on meat. Meat required no special cooking by gas stove to kill the germs in it. All that was necessary was to hold out a chop on the end of a twig in the sunshine, and it was cooked to a turn in five minutes.

I can see the first man on his birthday, mounted on a tree stump, sternly gaze round, and in weird monkey gibber address the universe, the sun, moon, stars, planets, and all whom it may concern, in these words :—

“I am a man. The first of all men. *Homo hominum*. Which, being interpreted from monkey

Latin, means the man of men. *Homo hominum*," he iterated, as he threw up his toad-stool pot-hat in the air, thereby showing his brain had a budding germ of classic lore, and also symbolising the fealty of man to the usages of the future pot-hat brigade.

"The first of men," cried Adam, as he deftly tatoood "No. I." on his chest with chalk. "No other man can ever be as great as I, excepting Mada, who will be the last of all men. Adam and Mada, the first and last of the species. He and I. Behold in me the founder of a new race. The initiating impulse of a thousand creeds. Wherever my descendants in the John Bull line once plant their feet (which have ceased to be hands) there will they grip the soil and hold it for ever."

See that, Germany?

Are you listening, France?

Pay attention, Russia!

"I shall be the father of countless kings, chiefs, and rulers, who, in coming ages, will subjugate and ill-treat the rest of the world. I shall be the sire of money-lenders and rogues like those gibbering apes I see in the trees around listening to this oration."

Then the first man descended from the stump. Not being a public speaker of the modern school, he was quite satisfied with this touching and brief address to the world. His proclamation was finished.

What prophetic words did he utter. Foreseeing that some of his offspring would degenerate and

become, as Max Nordau calls them, decadents, he warned and cautioned his hearers against expecting too much.

In the fulness of the prolific brood, the first man saw some would be bad eggs. Yes, very bad eggs. He understood the doctrine of Atavism, the tendency to revert to the original type. To reproduce some useless features of the original stock. Some sons of the first man reverting to ways that are beneath them and unworthy of the high development of manhood.

The first man finished this unique and royal proclamation, but returning to his family circle he continued his loquacity just as an 1898 orator continues to talk at home after his address to the rabble.

"My father was a monkey," said he, in the tone you hear a plutocrat in the pride of family greatness say; "my father broke stones for 3s. a day, and now I am an alderman and worth £100 a week." "You must expect," he continued, "ridicule, envy, and malice from the anthropoid apes whom I have surpassed and eclipsed. They will call you mushroom peers, upstarts, stuck up monkeys, who have grown too big for their cocoa-nuts. They will assert my father hung up his tail head downwards, and my mother did the scratching. But let them vaunt their spleen, for I now present the family with the armorial escutcheon of man, which can never alter as long as the world lasts. It is quartered as in true heraldry.

Left inferior quarter a starfish, indicative of radiata, or lowest form of animal life. Right inferior quarter, a snail, indicative of the next sub-kingdom, the mollusca. Left superior quarter, a fly, indicates the articulata. Right superior quarter, a baboon, indicates the vertebrata. The shield has a crest, a gorilla holding a spring chicken in his mouth, and under his left toe is the for ever discarded example of farinaceous food—a new bun.”

Then the first man slept.

1665.

A ROMANCE OF THE GREAT PLAGUE.

THIS is a tale of long ago. Long before the black man, with his henroost of gins trailing at his heels, was allowed to chyak and stop respectable people on the Queen's highway with his eternal cadge. Before the black fellow was made a pet of and given blankets and tramrides and rum for his vote.

It was in the year 1665. That is why I call the tale 1665. The plague had a jubilee reign in London all to itself. It was the identical form of plague that frightened you all when you heard of it in Bombay recently. The plague, like the jubilee rejoicings of to-day, held high festival in London that year.

I was educated in medicine and surgery and other things at St. Bartholomew's College and Hospital. The hospital is in Smithfield, the other things were scattered about London indiscriminately. When I was not studying I used to moon round the venerable old buildings of the ancient hospital. Sometimes I felt very bad. One day when I had been mooning round the grand old architecture of the most ancient

part of the edifice the foundation of this romance came into my head.

In 1665 London was devastated by a plague, and few families could boast escape from its merciless ravages. Those who were hale and hearty to-day might be stiff in death e'er next sundown. People who could by any means accomplish it fled from the pest-stricken city, little heeding or caring what befell their homes or property so long as they were far from the pestilence. Then footpads and robbers arose like a host of locusts to devour that which was left behind.

Old Smithfield, the deathplace of martyrs, blackened with the blackest of fanatical crimes and saturated with the gore from the breasts of hundreds of victims who were innocent of all sins but that of conscientiousness; old Smithfield was one muddy, damp waste, from whose bosom arose battered posts, and on whose breast lay the filth of refuse and garbage of the outcasts of a great city. Adjacent to it was the great London, the city of wealth and plunder and plague. Like Babylon of old, a vast ocean of scourge, sacrilege and profanity. Between the crowded habitations of London on one hand and the muddy waste of Smithfield on the other was, and is, the Priory and Hospital of St. Bartholomew; in that time a monastery and hospital all in one. Subsequently the hospital was separated from the priory, but that has not prevented the Church from, whenever

possible, lording it over the medical fraternity. The Church has always used medicine as its catspaw. Formerly the cat whose paw was used to obtain the chestnuts from the fiery Gehenna had to be kept by the clerical descendants of the original monkey. Now the descendants of the monkey have more brains, and they say to pussy medicine, though you keep yourself yet we insist on our inalienable rights of using your paw. And they do it.

Well, reverting, the day was drawing to a close when a woman, clad in a thin shawl, hurried across Smithfield in the direction of Newgate, and then turned sharply up a small alley towards the Fleet Ditch. She was well-proportioned and of comely shape, and her demeanour was graceful yet dignified.

As she rounded the corner she came into collision with a burly labourer—half ploughman, half poacher—who was coming in the opposite direction, and the concussion caused the phial she was carrying to drop and break.

"Where be you going at this hour of the day, lassie?" said the labourer. "It is very late for such fine birds to be abroad alone;" and he stretched forth his hand and caught her by the wrist.

"Pray let me go, sir," she exclaimed.

"Let un go, lassie? darn us if I do, or anyways not until I ha' a good kiss from such a pretty mouth." And he threw his other arm around her delicate neck as he drew her towards him.

"Ruffian," she exclaimed, "release me. Help, help!"

"Ah, un may squeal, lassie, as much as 'un likes ; there baint no one as can hear you," he replied, as he proceeded to carry out his intention. But just as he was about to touch her with his lips, he reeled sideways as he received a well-directed blow against the side of his head.

"Zounds," he roared, as he turned and beheld a young man of gentlemanly mien, who followed up his first assault with a second blow, "I'll learn you manners, my young jackanapes, interfering with honest folk in the King's highway. May be as you want a lesson or two from your elders as can give it you. Take that." And he rushed with fury on his foe and felled him to the earth. The young man, nothing daunted, arose and continued the unequal combat, but the heavier build and greater strength of the labourer left no doubt but that in a few minutes he would disable his young opponent and seriously injure him. Indeed, it would have gone hard with him had not the sound of many feet approaching, and the light of lanterns, arrested the attention of the combatants.

"The watch," said the bully ; "curse the watch coming ; I'd a killed the varmint in two minutes more." And he hurried off out of sight.

"Hullo," said the leading watchman, "what's the matter here ? You seem to have been spreeing about with yourself a bit, young man."

The young man then detailed the circumstances of the case to the assembled group, who listened in that condescending, patronising, half incredulous manner assumed by the lower myrmidons of the law when they are appealed to in such cases.

"You had better be off, young fellow, instead of brawling about here and trying on a cock-and-bull story with us, unless you want to spend the night in the watch-house," said the leader. "Where's the gal as you said was here?" he added with a leer.

"I don't know; she must have gone during the fight. I only saw her features for a moment."

"Now, clear off with you and such a likely tale," said the watchman, as he and his fellows fell into line again and trudged off.

CHAPTER II.

THE young gentleman—for such he was—slowly made his way across Smithfield to a dilapidated shanty, where he knocked upon the door. To his summons an old hag responded, and he entered and ascended to a garret.

"Shall I get you anything, Mr. Arnold?" she inquired, in a hoarse voice that sounded more like the croak of a frog than the tone of a human being.

"Only a pitcher of water," he responded. "I have been hurt, and I desire to set myself right again."

She answered not, but descended the staircase, muttering to herself: "I knowed well he'd come to a bad end, stewing and sticking amongst them dying and dead people a' day long at Bartelmy's instead of a acting as he should do. But there, perhaps if he didn't a carry on so, he wouldn't employ me. But it ain't no business of mine if he do, and if he alikes to kill hisself with them knives and fakes afore he's made a doctor, old Sal Craven knows what to do with them few clothes he has upstairs. They ain't much for a poor old body like me; but there, that's what comes of a doing for them as is cranky with their learning and sich rubbish, instead of nursing the quality. And he don't pay much neither, and if I wasn't to get a few pickings off the victuals, and a forget the change unless he arsked for it, maybe I'd starve for anyone cares. Money! money! he ain't got no money as he'd aleave a body, sleeping like he do, a'most on the boards."

Mr. John Arnold was about twenty-two, of slight build and good features. His bearing was proud, and a certain swagger of independence added a charm to the style. His expression was kind and thoughtful, but his apparel bore witness to an economy that few would practise, unless by the dire necessity of a limited income. The one attic in which he lived contained but the scantiest articles of furniture, some well worn books, and odd papers. It was here, amidst Middlesex fogs and dampness,

did John Arnold conduct his studies in the mysteries of medicine. From the garret window was a view of the dome of old St. Paul's, as it rose majestically like a giant amidst the pigmy towers of the surrounding churches.

Many were the hours in which John Arnold had sat silently at his attic window in meditation, gazing upon the weird scenes of mystery and bleakness. It was here he had raised up those castles in the air which each one builds for himself in solitude and silence. It was here he had solved problems of intricate abstruseness which should have borne him on a wave of knowledge to the haven of his desire.

CHAPTER III.

NEARLY a week had passed, and Arnold was engaged in the diurnal routine of walking the hospital when the surly porter approached, and told him of a poor woman who had sought assistance there. In those times hospital management was different. No bustling board of urban magnates glorified themselves by weekly meetings to supervise and direct institutions of whose internal transactions they were grossly ignorant. Consequently Arnold was not treated as a child at apron strings. The purport of the message was a plea for assistance for a child stricken with plague.

The physician of the ward approached, and Arnold explained that he intended going out to the case if he could be spared.

"Very well, John," laughed the physician, "I can do without you. Mind you don't catch the plague."

"No fear of that, sir," replied Arnold, "I've seen too much of it."

Not long afterwards he knocked at the door of a humble abode.

"Come in," said a gentle voice.

John Arnold entered and came face to face with the woman in whose behalf he had the *fracas* with the tramp. The recognition was mutual. Her face flushed as she stretched forth her hand and pressed that of her friend with a warmth that could only have sprung from a sense of deep gratitude.

"Do not think me unkind or ungrateful," she pleaded, in a low and supplicating tone; "my husband lay on that bed with the pestilence, and next night they carried him to the pits for the dead. It was for his potion I had been out, and I was wending my way home when that ruffian—but you know the rest."

"Pray do not refer to it, Mrs. —," and he stopped short.

"Mrs. Linacre," she added.

"Pray do not refer to it, Mrs. Linacre," he repeated, "I was only fearful you might not have

escaped further peril, as the highways are not safe now after dusk. But tell me, I have come to visit a patient and must return as soon as possible, for the calamities with which our city struggles call for all my spare time to minister to the wants of the sick. You seem faint; let me lead you to a seat. Now, sit there and I will return after I have seen the child. Where is he?"

"Oh, sir," she sobbed, "he lies where his poor father laid not a week since, and it is my child now who is down with it, and my brain whirls at the thought. Help me, sir! But I am stronger now and will show you."

She clasped her hands in a vice-like grip as she walked across the room. He followed in silence. Then he moved the bedclothes and revealed a face that was fair, but blue and congested. The eyes were nearly closed and sunken, the lips black and dry, whilst a few beads of clammy perspiration stood on the forehead. Yet, withal, it was a face delineating beauty and refinement. A face of a child overshadowed by the grim monster of the plague. The mother was reflected in the offspring, but ethereally reflected as a sweet innocent child. A young spirit, lying helpless and defenceless against the blast of a merciless scourge which gloried in prostrating, and then gloating over the havoc it had made.

When John Arnold had finished the examination, the mother peered at him with a terrified look to

read his innermost thoughts. She could only mutely ask for that information which her soul sought, but her lips refused to utter. Arnold's face presented a blank of impenetrable stolidity, as he replied to that look which asked more than mere words could do.

"Mrs. Linacre, the child suffers not only from plague, but more than that. Forgive me for saying it, but it suffers from the scourge of poverty, that has lowered and weakened its constitution. I know he has been deprived of the comforts of life that are the essence of existence in the refined. The absence of small things, that can be procured by even moderate incomes, is the cause of middle-class heart-rending, silent suffering and misery in thousands of families whose pride hides from the world the appearance of poverty, yet who suffer, and suffer keenly, because of their educated and sensitive organisation.

"Many a smile covers a pain that is excruciating. The physical labourer has his trials and his wants, poor fellow, but the brain worker, with acute sensibilities, is he who undergoes the agony of perpetual torture. His fate is the possession of tenderest emotions polished to the highest state of nervous response, and his destiny in life is to suffer the harrowing of coarse animal collisions. The danger in the child is imminent, and no man can say which way the balance will turn. By midnight we shall know. My orders must be obeyed to the letter or

his chance has gone. Can I rely on you being able to carry them out and alter them should certain contingencies arise? I cannot wait, as duty elsewhere is pressing, but I will return anon and see how he is progressing."

"Can you not stay, sir?" she enquired, "he is all that is left to me in life."

"I cannot," he rejoined, "but you will be able to manage, I hope."

"Would it not be much better—indeed, may it not make all the difference to him if you could stay?"

"Yes, Mrs. Linacre, we should be sure then that every means available to science had been applied."

"Then you will remain to save my child," she vociferated, as her voice gradually became firmer.

"I cannot," he replied.

"You shall," she hissed between her clenched teeth, as her eyes flashed with the fire of a tigress turned at bay. "You shall not leave this room whilst I have power to lift one finger to stay you."

To attempt to reason with her was useless, as she stood up to her full height, with every nerve and muscle strained to its utmost, a picture of sublime nobleness and grandeur—a queen by the hand of God, with the grace of majestic womanly beauty adorning and lending lustre to her magnificent form.

John Arnold was helpless and thunderstruck at such a change in the woman he had until then only seen as a gentle being. He fully realised it was the

energy of despair and madness which lent the strength of a lion to a creature so fragile. The poor mother saw the danger in which her child was, and she determined at all hazard and at all risk to save him. In such times the puniest and weakest become terrible and herculean in the height of their fury.

It is possible that he could physically have escaped, but the weight of a moral power developed by her attitude offered an impassable barrier which few men could have conquered.

Hence Arnold resigned himself to the situation, and began to carry out the treatment which he had expected Mrs. Linacre to adopt, trusting that in a short time she would relax the stubbornness of her determination. But he was mistaken, for Mrs. Linacre upheld the same attitude of dogged inflexibility with which she had mastered him. Mentally, therefore, he acknowledged himself beaten, and resolved to stay till the end.

The fire was replenished, and blazed up the chimney as the cold clamminess of prostration gave place to a burning fever in the invalid. As the fever increased the child became restless and tossed about.

A neighbouring church clock struck eleven. Mrs. Linacre looked fixedly at Arnold. He, interpreting her gaze, replied:—

“Within one hour we shall know.”

Presently the invalid seemed quieter; then, throwing his arms out, he murmured:

"Mother, mother."

In a moment she had noiselessly crossed the room, and was bending over him.

"What is it, my darling?" she asked. But no response came, and he heeded not her words.

"Oh, how he perspires," she said, turning in alarm to Arnold, who was now eagerly bending over his charge.

"He is saved!" joyfully exclaimed Arnold.

"My God, my God!" cried the poor mother, overcome by emotion as a flood of scalding tears gushed forth from her eyes, and she sank down on the bed. "My boy, my boy, bless you!"

Ere the sound of twelve broke the stillness of the midnight mist, the invalid was peacefully enjoying a healthful sleep, and his recovery was assured.

CHAPTER IV.

NEXT morning that venerable earth-worm, Mrs. Sal Craven, was despatched with a message to Mrs. Linacre to ascertain how her child was, and to say that Mr. John Arnold would call later on if everything were going on satisfactorily and no untoward circumstances had arisen to demand his earlier attendance. As such happy conditions prevailed, his visit on the second day was late. Then on the third

day he came not at all ; and Mrs. Linacre wondered how it was.

“ Oh,” cried she, “ that I might have wealth to reward such devotion—that I might have some means to show, though in the slightest way, that I can never forget the services of such a being.”

But on this eventful day, instead of John Arnold, a sleek, wizen-faced, office-dried man in shiny black cloth, and carrying a stuff bag, made his way to Mrs. Linacre’s room.

He knocked at the door.

“ Come in, Mr. Arnold,” said the same gentle voice.

The sleek man entered, looking sleeker than ever.

“ What is your business, sir ? ” imperiously demanded the widow, taken aback at her own mistake, and not a little chagrined thereby.

“ I wish to speak with Mr. Simon Linacre, ma’am.”

“ That is impossible ; he died five days ago,” she replied ; and her eyes filled with moisture.

“ Then, ma’am, are you the relict of the same Simon Linacre, Esquire ? ” obsequiously asked the sleek man, with a profound, awkward bow.

“ The same,” said the widow.

“ Mr. Simon had a brother, a shipowner, named Harold, bachelor, within the Liberties of the City of London, I believe ? ”

“ He had,” said Mrs. Linacre.

"Then, ma'am, it is the duty of your humble and very obedient servant to inform you that Harold Linacre, Esquire, aforesaid, was carried off by the plague," and here the sleek man devoutly crossed himself, "at eleven minutes to nine in the forenoon of the third day of this month, and, dying testate at the aforesaid time, bequeathed to you, his heir at law, his whole estate, property, personal and real. Long live the King. Order in the Court."

The sleek man again bowed his awkward submission.

"Ma'am, the testator, Harold Linacre, Esquire, as aforesaid, knowing that in this world some men get more than they want and others get less than they can conveniently live on, directed in his testamentary depositions, signed, sealed, and attested before witnesses, in accordance with statutes made and provided, and made and provided by judges' interpretations, that the sum of two hundred pounds be at once delivered to you, always provided you be not dead of starvation before my arrival. I, his trusted attorney, not having lost any on the way, and without having used it for my own mining speculations in cemeteries, will now hand over the sum on receiving due acknowledgment."

Then the sleek man dived his hand into the stuff bag, and rummaging about amongst various deeds and his lunch, drew forth a bag, which he deposited on the table with a responding chink. He looked up

and smiled, with a dreadful sickly grin, as much as to say, "Look, what a good boy am I!"

"Ma'am, I will trouble you for the receipt."

"Sir, I cannot furnish it, as I have no stationery," said Mrs. Linacre.

The sleek man clasped his hand firmly round the neck of the bag, till his wiry fingers almost crushed the gold out of shape, and said:—

"Ma'am, an attorney is well acquainted with the law, and without a proper receipt you will not have the money. Although you are heir to some £80,000, saving the probate duty on the sum gross you inherit, yet I cannot trust you without a receipt. I do not doubt your word, yet I must have your bond."

"Sir, I tell you I have no means of giving one," said the widow.

"Ma'am," he replied, "I can take a seat and wait. My time is at your service at 13s. 4d. per hour," and he bowed again. "An attorney of repute would not trust his own brother with such a thing, for if he did do so, he would rue the day his confidence in the world over-rode his knowledge of the law."

"But surely my word, in this case, is enough?"

The sleek man was silent. Then he turned more yellow and a little paler and looked more parchment-like and drier, if it were possible, and he seemed to shrink within his black cloth as his mouth slowly opened, and he, trembling with emotion, gasped out:—

"He didn't die of it here, did he?"

"Mr. Simon Linacre died of plague in this very room," slowly and distinctly retorted Mrs. Linacre.

The attorney's hands quitted the bag, and his knees shook as he backed to the door.

"Ma'am, I feel somewhat overcome at the news, and require fresh air," he said, as he lifted the latch.

"But what about the receipt, sir; you have forgotten the receipt?"

"It is of no consequence," called out the sleek man, as he hurried to the top of the stairs.

"And here is your bag, come and take it away."

"No, no, you can have the lunch," he shouted, as he flew down the staircase; "not for a seat on the bench would I again enter that room—not for the world."

In a moment he was in the narrow alley, bolting from the house at the top of his speed.

Mrs. Linacre thought the matter over, and decided to await the arrival of John Arnold before she would take any further steps to utilise the wealth inherited by her.

CHAPTER V.

NEXT day had far advanced and still Arnold's footstep had not crossed the threshold. Mrs. Linacre became vexed, then she pondered the matter over without coming to any definite conclusion, and finally

resolved to seek Mrs. Craven and hear from her why Arnold had not come. She had not quitted her home many minutes when she met Mrs. Sal Craven. The old waiting woman endeavoured to pass unnoticed, but Mrs. Linacre addressed her and asked after her master.

"He's summat else to do now besides a-running round to you every day, and summat as 'll take him a long time to finish maybe, and perhaps it won't take so long neither, after all. He don't want no widders a-messing round him, but wants to lay quiet like, and draw his breath peaceable, he do."

"Mrs. Craven," began Mrs. Linacre, "you do not seem to be in a good humour to-day, and I am sure Mr. Arnold would not like to hear you talking so about him. Have you just left him?"

"No, I ain't ; I left him last night, as he hadn't no more need for me," and the old woman laughed, "and it's no use your a-going round, as there ain't anything more to be picked up."

"What do you mean, you wicked creature?" enquired Mrs. Linacre.

"Who's a wicked creature, I should like to know? A very fine thing for the pot to call the kittle black ; but I'm before you this time, widder, and as you crack on such airs afore an old woman who's old enough to be yer mother, I'll out and tell yer as he's dead I hopes by now, and I wish as you was too."

The old worthy shuffled off, leaving Mrs. Linacre stupefied with a dreadful fear of some impending or consummated calamity. As soon as she recovered herself she hurried to John Arnold's garret, and knocked at the door. No answer was returned.

Then she knocked again unavailingly.

Emboldened by fear, she opened the door and peered in. At the opposite side of the room was a human being lying full length and motionless on a hard couch. She advanced to find her dread forebodings were unquestionable certainties, for John Arnold was prostrate with the plague.

The sick man opened his eyes, and in his delirium, staring at Mrs. Linacre, said :—

“Leave me, Mrs. Craven, leave me to die in peace—what more can you want, despicable wretch ; have you not stolen all my things?—pray go and leave me—what else is there to take?—go, I say, before the curse of a dying man falls on you—give me but one draught of water, and then go ; go for ever.”

“Mr. Arnold, Mr. Arnold ! It is I, Mrs. Linacre, and not Mrs. Craven, who am with you,” said the widow, as she knelt by his side and seized his hand.

“Give me water,” he muttered.

Mrs. Linacre looked round for a goblet, but the garret was denuded of everything portable.

“Water, water,” murmured Arnold.

“Oh, Mr. Arnold, John, wait one moment. It is I who will nurse you. Wait whilst I seek assistance.

All that money can buy shall now be yours. I am rich, and you shall want for nought."

"Water, I tell you, water!" shouted Arnold, with an energy little to be expected.

She sped downstairs, and away to the hospital where Arnold had spent so many weary years in acquiring knowledge that would be buried in his grave, and here she quickly was ushered to one of Arnold's teachers. The physician instantly consented to visit his student, and also brought such assistance with him as was at hand.

The physician and Mrs. Linacre entered the attic together, and the noise of following footsteps aroused the sick man, who said:—

"Give me drink, Mrs. Craven; why don't you give me drink. Oh that Mrs. Linacre were here for a moment."

"Mrs. Linacre is with you, John," said the widow, as she knelt by the couch.

"Who does he ask for?" said the doctor. "Who is Mrs. Linacre?"

"He means me," replied Mrs. Linacre, as a deep flush suffused her face.

"Oh, no," spoke Arnold, "I see her as I lay here dreaming; she passes in and out of the room, and sometimes she hovers over me. She vainly waits my coming to see her child. I must get up and go. Help me up," and the invalid attempted to rise. "I will dress in a moment. Yes, yes; I am coming;

I hear your voice—how soft and sweet it is. I will come; he will live; but I will come, if it be but to raise one smile to your pallid features.”

“Give him the draught,” said the physician; “it will soothe him, poor fellow. How long has he lain like this?”

“She said she left last night, and so he must have been here alone since,” murmured Mrs. Linacre.

“You have come again, Mrs. Linacre,” rambled Arnold. “It does me good to hear your voice. Come closer, I must speak to you softly—nearer, nearer, my spirit, so no one hears us, in your ear. Oh, do not move away from me, who am dying. You are right; there will soon be no more John Arnold; but I care not. ’Twere better to die to save your child than to live in lonely selfishness. Yes, come to me, death; by such fair hands, by such means, thy sting has lost its venom.”

“O doctor,” interposed Mrs. Linacre, “say he will recover—say he can yet live. Is there still hope for John? Is there still one spark of hope for my John Arnold?”

The doctor sadly shook his head.

“Tell me—I now have wealth—can nothing save him? Take all, everything, my life if necessary, but preserve him. Say that he will live.”

“Too late, too late; his chance has gone,” replied the physician. “Last night, even this morning, and he might have been rescued: but the time has flown, and John Arnold will sink.”

Mrs. Linacre heard no more, for she swooned.

“Take her away,” whispered the physician. “Poor creature, she will be better out of this scene, which will close in a few hours.” And the attendants obeyed the directions given them.

CHAPTER VI.

DONG—dong—dong—sounded from the belfry of “St. Bartholomew the Less,” as the darkness of night again enshrouded London in dismal desolation.

“Who’s that bell a-tolling for?” asked one gossip of her companion.

“Why, Mr. Arnold, of the hospital, him as was took with it through nursing the widow’s child, and died afore vespers,” was the reply.

CHAPTER VII.

IT was a glorious summer’s evening, and the golden rays of Phœbus cast lengthened shadows of monuments and crosses upon the verdant grass which grew as a soft carpet over the rural churchyard of St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields.

A lady sat by the side of a mound. Her hair was white, and time had furrowed indelible lines on a face that even now was beautiful. She wore a look

of holy resignation, and a calm, soft expression pervaded and sanctified every feature. She was singing softly, but in a tone of exquisite melody, these verses :—

Though years have faded far away,
And death has blighted all that once was gay,
'Tis here I linger, day by day,
 In sadness always dreaming.
O would I could again but see
The spirit that was all in all to me,
And pass to rest along with thee,
 In sadness always dreaming.

Her voice was hushed as the sound of a light, firm step advanced along the path, and a young athletic man stood before her.

“Ah ! mother,” he said, “I thought I should find you here.”

“Yes, my son,” replied Mrs Linacre, “whilst life remains to me I wish only to pass it here, and when it is finished to be laid in the next earth to his.”

“Come, mother, come,” he rejoined, “the bell has stopped and we must go.” He gave Mrs. Linacre his arm, and they slowly walked away from the mound, decorated with an oaken panel, which bore engraved on it :—

JOHN ARNOLD,

Who departed this life during the plague, 1665.

His life was given for another.

STINGLES' FATHER.

THE EMINENT Q.C.

STINGLES and I lived in the same diggings together, when we were medical students. He was not a man to talk about his family affairs, but one night he related this narrative. Knowing him as well as I did, I am certain every word he said was the truth. It is of no consequence that I repeat it, as Stingles, who was the last of his line, is no longer living. After Stingles qualified as a full-blown doctor he obtained a commission in the army. It suited him down to the ground. He was just the man who could shine as an army surgeon. Besides that he had a fad about dressing gunshot wounds, and nothing would ever deter him from dressing a wound according to his pet fad. He would go to any trouble, and wrap himself up for an hour over an ordinary cut, if he could only be allowed to treat it by the fad process. If you did not let him dress it by the fad process he would have nothing to do with it; so the army was just the place for him.

Stingles was under fire several times as army surgeon. Habit, as it always does in such instances,

made him quite indifferent to the actual struggle that was going on around him. It was not his work. Being a surgeon his duties were to patch up and put together the remains of men who had been hacked about by sabre cuts and cannon shots and rifle fire of the combatants. He was specially commissioned to ameliorate and annul the mischief that the rest of the regiment were specially commissioned to execute. That is like Government routine. One department is established to neutralise the labours of another department. By the Queen's regulations Stingles was prohibited from doing any killing himself. That is why the combatant officers cock their noses up so, and fancy they are so much superior to the medical officers.

In his last engagement our troops were so hard pressed that they had to retire precipitately, just at the time, too, that Stingles was deeply engrossed in his fad process of dressing the wounds of a guardsman. He was stooping down at work at his system and never had any notion that he was left alone. The combatant officers, those fellows who, in military life, scoop in all the substantive rank, the honours, the glories, the grades and pickings that fall to the lot of the sons of Mars, had retired with their men, and Stingles did not know it.

The first idea he had was when he looked up and saw a swarthy lancer charging straight down on him. He knew what was coming then. He jumped to

his feet and whipped out his sword ; but the cavalryman was too good for him, and as he tilted he ran his lance slick through Stingles' ribs into his right lung, and severed the superior branch of the right pulmonary artery. Stingles was thrown on his back, and the blood gushed from his mouth as he coughed and spat it out and choked. When our troops recovered the lost ground, they found the wounded guardsman, who said that, as Stingles gasped and coughed and choked, he managed to blurt out, " My poor old dad."

The guardsman is still a pensioner, and he graphically describes Stingles' death. It gives you the creeps to hear it. After I heard it I had nightmare every night for a week. I imagined myself in deadly combat with a dirty, swarthy, savage cavalryman, who, holding a wavy-bladed dirk in his left hand, tried to drive it through the superior branch of my right pulmonary artery. Hoarse, demoniacal shouts of savages, intermingled with the ping, ping, of rifle shots, assailed my ears as the imaginary horde dashed past, grinning and gesticulating at me in my struggle.

Then the phantom infidel lancer would suddenly disengage himself from my clutch, pull his horse back on his haunches and swing his right arm backwards to give force to the thrust of the lance he poised in his right hand. Just when the point of the lance touched my chest, I would find myself armed with the kitchen poker, slashing away like fury at the

shaft to break it through, using every cut in broadsword exercise and a lot more cuts that are not in the army regulations for mutilating men. The blows rained upon the lance were always futile, and the lance would crash through the centre of my chest and pin me down to the feathers in the bed like a butterfly is pinned on a cork. Then the savage warrior would exultantly shout out, "No good, sahib, you are lanced yourself this time." With this he would give the lance a twist, and draw it out, wrenching away my breastbone from my ribs. The sight of my own raw inside used to give me such a start that I would awake just in time to save myself being drowned in the bath of perspiration that had poured out of me in the funk. The identical nightmare would recur every night, and I would wake just at the same instant. But it was completely cured when I gave up eating tomato sauce that Stingles and I were so fond of when we were in "diggings." That settled the nightmare.

Well, Stingles and I had been grinding hard at the "Theory of Medicine" for months, and we got so full of it that we could not hold any more at any price. We became dazed, and could not remember even the things that were quite familiar to us previously. We knew what that meant. All medical students know what it means, too. It's simply awful. It's no good trying to continue reading, because it is impossible to understand the words you see before

you. It must be given up, and you have to obtain a complete change, somehow or other, or else the mind becomes palsied, as it were. You cannot absorb any more, and you cannot remember the stuff you have already studiously crowded in. That was exactly our condition. So we surrendered. We slung all the books into a corner, and cursed them deep and long, and said we would have a smoke and a drink, and make ourselves into men again, instead of fagged-out medical students. This treatment is the best that is known for the symptoms. It is time-honoured—has the sanctity of antiquity—has been adopted by countless thousands of students who were highly prized, and justly so, as doctors, afterwards. It has been practised with the greatest success by the most eminent surgeons and physicians the world has ever seen. They never would have been the brilliant lights in science they afterwards became if they had not adhered to this beneficent plan of restoring the equilibrium between brain, mind, and body. It is highly recommended by the faculty to young gentlemen in similar dilemmas.

We were stocked full of tobacco ; so all we had to do to complete the cure was to put on our hats and go out to a pub., where there was a barmaid whom we rather fancied, as we thought she was not quite as bad as the others we knew more about. As usual, she was all smiles, frills, and brooches ; and after we had completed negotiations, she agreed to send the

coatless potman, with his white shirt-sleeves turned up above the elbows, down to our diggings with six large bottles of Guinness's stout. We carried off the bottles to our room very carefully. The spoil was equally divided—a tumbler and three bottles of stout on each side of the table, with the tobacco and corkscrew as common property in the middle, under the gas. We sat facing each other on opposite sides of the table in two rickety old armchairs, that you could not sleep in because the springs had been trying to escape through the seats for a long time, and had nearly succeeded.

We were obliged to ship the first bottle pretty quickly so as to produce a decided and beautiful effect on the system, and give ourselves confidence in the treatment ; then, having brought our constitutions up to the scratch, we slackened off and took the remainder of the bottles, according to our feelings, as we required them. The popping of the corks, and the bother of getting off the chair springs and rearranging them again, so as to be as comfortable as before, broke up the tale into sections—something like chapters in a book.

It was during the first bottle that Stingles opened his heart to me, and perhaps he never would have done so only he had muddled himself up by intently studying the "Theory of Medicine." Of course it may have been due to Guinness's new brew, which was extra strong in alcohol on this occasion, or it

may have been that his liver was out of order. Anyway, whatever the reason was does not much matter; but when the room was thick with tobacco smoke, so that we could hardly see each other, he launched out like this:

"You know, Hodgson, I was never intended for a doctor by my people. The bar was my destiny, and I had made up my mind to be a barrister, when a sudden family calamity made me forsake that profession and shift over into physic. My mater was a magnificent woman—good build, and deuced pretty even up to the time she died. She doated on me, and knew all the petty sorrows and annoyances a youngster has to contend with, without enquiring into them. Knowing them, she was able to make them less burdensome than they would otherwise have been. If any son had reason to love his mother I was that son. She was deeply attached to my poor old father, too, who was a Queen's Counsel. When the dad had a difficult brief to wade through, the mater used to give him a chance to master it by leaving him alone, and not doing as some women do, come rattling round complaining of what the cook had done, or the housemaid forgotten to do; or bothering him as to how much soap she ought to order for next week's floor-washing, or detailing all the silly details of the management of a family of three, and expecting him to say what he'd like for Sunday's dinner, or wanting to go to bed

just when he was cosily enjoying himself over the study fire. She did not do that tommy rot. She simply ordered what she thought proper, and if she had not anything sensible to talk about, she said nothing, and gave the dad's brains a chance of earning money by being unhampered by a lot of domestic twaddle. The consequence was the dad soon rose to a high status in the legal profession because he had not a fool for a wife.

"The mater, as I say, was deuced pretty, and going out she was naturally run after a good deal by men; but she treated them all in a frank, open manner, and they soon dropped down to the fact that she was as beautiful as she was good, and their low blackguard notions had to be saved up for a different type of woman.

"Although the old people had been married for over twenty years, yet you would occasionally see the mater standing by the dad's chair, affectionately smoothing down his hair. And she never rubbed the hair the wrong way, or muddled up the parting, or anything of the kind, as some women do. So you can understand the dad stood it well. In fact, they were a happy and well-matched pair."

Said Stingles, by way of parenthesis:

"Hand over the corkscrew, old man, after you have done with it, and I'll open my second bottle before I go on. That is good stout. Now I can continue.

"The dad had a little farm away in Kent, and some fruit from the orchard was sent up to our place, and the mater, just to please the dad and make him fancy the farm was a nice sort of property to own, whereas it was not, ate some of the fruit and it gave her cholera, acute English cholera. The mater was never a fruit-eater, or else she would never have been the fine and good woman she was, and that is perhaps one reason why the fruit took more effect. Had she been a fruit-eater she might possibly in time have degenerated to the morbid character of those watery, sickly, weak-minded women whose fruit-rotten teeth are such a good match for their morals. She would never have fallen so low as women who stuff themselves with fruit, because it is easy to eat and pleasant for the palate, and who, you will find, drift as easily into depravity as a stone rolls down hill, because they have no stamina and no constitutional power of resistance. You can't get stamina or power of resistance or a sturdy physique from a sickly fruit or vegetarian diet. Neither do you get a powerful, manly or masterful mind from such monkey-like diet. You only get a monkey's beastliness or a monkey's morals from such foods, especially in the tempero-tropic latitudes. The more debilitating the climate the greater is the danger of living on such wishy-washy muck. The climate may enfeeble, but a poor diet works greater ravages. In cold latitudes a man can digest almost anything, but in hot latitudes he

requires easily-digested, life-supporting animal nutriment. Fancy giving a poor beggar dying of such an exhausting disease as typhoid fever a windy apple or a puffy peach to suck and burst him. Damn it, man, anyone who advocated that ought to have his diploma stuffed down his gullet. If the animal foods save sick people from the grave, and we see they do every day of our lives, with those five hundred new cases each day to treat at our hospital, why should an ordinary man be such a darned fool as to mess himself up with a rotten fruit or vegetable diet when he can get meat or other animal sustenance. Heaven help the nation that discards meat and bread and potatoes and animal foods. You know the diet racket as well as I do, and as I am speaking of my household I do not want to mix them up with lascivious-minded fruit-eaters. Another night we will slash into it together.

“Well, when the mater contracted cholera from fruit-eating it killed her.

“They laid her out on the bed with the usual neatness and attention, and then the poor old dad went in again to see her.

“That was too much for him, and he became demented. He knelt on the side of the bed and jabbered away a whole lot of incoherent terms of endearment, patting her hands, and saying all kinds of foolish things to her just as if she could hear what he said. The tears flowed down his cheeks in such

profusion that he could hardly see. Then he talked a lot of baby chatter to her as if she were a child and he trying to amuse and interest her. Then he took the rings off her fingers and put them on other fingers, and told her how pretty she looked with the diamonds and rubies glistening on her soft white hands. Then he raised one of her cold dead hands to his head, and stroked his own hair down with it, just like she used to do when alive, and he told her it felt so warm and soothing. He kissed her hands and covered her face with a silk handkerchief, and, turning round said to an imaginary audience, as he raised his fingers in admonition, 'Hush, hush, don't make a noise or you'll wake my beautiful angel.' Then he'd burst into crying more than ever. He told her not to sleep too long, as vacation was coming, and, the courts being closed, they would go away to the country together to their farm in Kent, and wander through the lanes and across the green fields hand in hand, and see the sun set in a mass of golden red, intermingled with banks of black rolling clouds, and the change of air would make her eyes look more lovely than ever they were. He remained kneeling in the same spot by the bed hour after hour, never shifting his position, but carrying on in this way all the while.

"Then the servants had to go in and lead him away to another room and feed him with slops and broths and things like that, and yet he never seemed

to know them or see them. But as soon as he was left there alone for a few minutes he would get up and go back again to the bed, kneel exactly on the same spot and begin it all over again—the mutterings, the tears, the baby talk, the terms of endearment, the rings, handkerchief, and all, and keep on at it till he was led away.

“At night time the servants stayed with him till he fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. But as soon as ever he awoke he would get up and they had to dress him. Then he would walk off again to the bedroom and repeat it all over again. After the mater was buried at the end of five days, he never seemed to realise that she had gone for ever. He walked back into the room and stared at the newly-made bed, then muttered incoherently to himself, and turning round went over to the mater’s wardrobe, and pulled all the dresses out one after another, and re-arranged them and hung them up again on the pegs. He blew out her gloves and flattened them down, and put them away in pairs, just as if he expected her to come back again and put them on. He touched up the feathers and stuck bonnet pins in her hats so as to make them look as if she had just thrown them down carelessly. He took up the fur boa and put the smooth fluff against his cheeks, and then he laid it down by the side of her jacket on the table. Then he gave way to tears again, and sat down on the lounge so that he could

see both the clock on the mantelpiece and the door at the same time. He kept on staring from one to the other, watching and listening as if waiting to hear the mater's footsteps when she came home again. Poor old dad !

"At the end of a month or so his grief was assuaged in a measure. He had aged at least twenty years in appearance ; his hair was quite white and he stooped. His features were drawn with a terrible look of intense suffering. He rarely spoke at all, and kept himself shut up in the study. His whole vigour seemed to have gone, and he never tried to do any work. One or two old friends used to force themselves in and sit there in spite of him and talk to him, and that gradually brought him back again to his normal state.

"He even improved so much that they drove him down to Chambers for an hour or two. He would sit there in a listless sort of way, pulling over old briefs and pottering about a bit. You see, his whole life was wrapped up in the mater. He loved her before he married her, he loved her as his wife, and he loved her after she was dead. People will say he was old-fashioned, and perhaps, as far as honour goes, he was so in regard to these matters, for he loved his own wife far better than anybody else's wife—even for a time. He really thought more of her than of any other woman. He talked and laughed with the loose lot he sometimes had to

associate with, but he never forgot that the mater, in his opinion, was the best woman in the world. There were no little backslidings from the path of strict integrity with him—no little secret assignations with gushing tarts overflowing with frivolous flightiness.

"You can realise what it was to the dad who had been through the ups and downs of professional life, deeply attached to his wife as his companion, counsellor and sweetheart all in one. Having all their lives pulled together in double harness, there is no wonder that his mind was unhinged by losing her who had become part and parcel of his existence. No wonder he failed to realise he was left alone in the world to complete the term of his existence in solitude. No wonder he was waiting to hear her return footstep, when he never again would walk by her side. No wonder he expected her back again when the very air itself seemed laden with her spirit, and her clothes and nick-nacks, trinkets and perfumes conjured up visions of warm affection and fond admiration; when every piece of furniture, every fold of drapery, every article in every part of his home, had some incident of its own to recall the ways and remind him of the habits of his dead wife.

"I can't go on, Hodgson, for a few minutes—the recollection upsets me so. Hand over the tobacco, and open my last bottle of stout, as well as your own, and I will manage to finish the narrative for you.

"The dad's great friend was a gentleman named Girder, of the firm of Girder, Planks and Co., contractors. Girder was gouty and a bit cross, but a blunt, straightforward John Bull, who never would agree to bribing members of Parliament to work bills through the House, or for other disgraceful sorts of assistance in business matters. He would not be a party to giving tips to Government officials or official parasites who insist on presents out of every job where the purse is the public treasury. Probably this trait in character drew Girder and the dad together as bosom friends. After the mater's death, Girder, Planks and Co. had an action against the Government for £50,000, balance of contract money unpaid. The solicitors for the plaintiff contractors handed their brief to the dad. It was the first he accepted since he went back to chambers. The contract was for a bridge over the river Washwell, and the contractors built the bridge. The defendants refused to pay, on the plea that part of the bridge was built under the river. The dad said he could not possibly see the force of such an absurd plea. The bridge had to be supported somehow, and in order to effect this, masonry and piers and iron pillars must necessarily be built up from the rocks forming the bed of the river. The fact that the foundations of the bridge were laid in the bed of the river was immaterial to the cause at issue, which was really to provide a suitable bridge for traffic over the river; and that they had done.

Part of the structure was in the water, of course, but the bridge itself was high above the tide. Mr. Girder said there must be some rascally scheming on the other side, or else the Government never would refuse to pay; and he insisted on the dad being leader on his side, as he was so eminent in his profession.

"The case came on in the High Court, and the Government retained a very strong bar—so very strong and long that they extended all down one side of the table, through several corridors, and right out into the street. The youngest junior was supported on the kerbstone by the junior member of the firm of solicitors, and he sat patiently and contentedly for that purpose in the gutter.

"The Government called, and put the local mayors and aldermen in the box to prove that the bridge, although built over the river, yet had some parts of it in the water. These gentlemen—decked out in their Sunday clothes, which were the most inappropriate clothes they possibly could wear if they wished to bow to the laws of harmony—could not for the lives of them see how a bridge that they were promised should be built over the river should have any part of it under the water. Not even so much as a rusty old nail ought to be submerged. They wanted a bridge over the river, and yet the contractors had actually supported the bridge by immense iron piers that rose from the bed of the

river itself. Under the gentle persuasion of cross-examination by the dad, they confessed their idea of a bridge over the River Washwell was a bridge held up by being attached to four gas balloons floating in the air. The gas to be bought by the contractors from the municipal authorities, who had their own plant, and *'didn't want no 'lectric lights in their borough at no price.'* If the balloons had stays of clothes'-line wire attached to each side and made fast to the local telegraph poles, then in windy weather there would be no fear of the balloons flying away with half a mile of iron bridge underneath them. They knew the requirements of their borough, and they knew what their ratepayers wanted without having any civil engineers down there to teach them. If they didn't know how to manage the borough, who did?

"The dad, as leader, had just finished cross-examining one of these enlightened aldermen when a telegram was handed up to the judge, who, after reading it, said he had received a communication which was intended for a juryman, and it was for the court to consider whether such a communication should be allowed to be made to any juryman whatever. He fully realised the importance of the communication, and, if counsel offered no objection, he thought he should be justified in reading it out in open court, so that this particular juryman himself and also his colleagues and the members of the bar

and the press reporters could be made fully aware of the substance and wording of the communication he had received. The communication had nothing whatever to do with the cause at issue, and he left it to counsel on both sides to say whether they objected to the course of procedure he proposed to take. The counsel having signified their assent to have the telegram read, the judge read out these ominous words :—

“‘Baby bad—come home early.’

“All the jurymen jumped up to go home, but the judge explained to them they would have to stay till the end of the case, and, moreover, it was only one baby of one jurymen who was affected.

“In case the action took rather longer than he anticipated, he might be permitted to tender a little friendly advice to the jurymen interested in this particular communication, and it was that if he took home a bottle of castor oil with him, he had better take it all himself to purge himself of contempt of Court, and not give any to the baby. Homœopathy might be all very well, but in these cases if one increased the disease by administering a purgative, the baby would turn itself completely inside out. It was as well for him to know this.

“Now, the introduction of all these domestic matters was the worst thing in the world for poor dad, because they brought back to his mind his own recent bereavement, and it so affected him that he

could not proceed with the case. It had to be left to his junior.

"They led the dad out into the barristers' robing room, and as soon as he got there he jumped up on the table, knelt down, caught up a glove that laid on the table, and began to pat it and stroke it affectionately, while the tears ran down his cheeks, and he uttered the same old words of endearment he had used when the mater was dead.

"The poor old dad," said Stingles, "is still at home going through the same terrible repetitions that almost break my heart to hear—and that is the reason why I forsook the law and entered as a medical student. I think I shall turn into bed now, there is no more beer ; so good night, old man."

THE GERMS GAVE A BALL.

DISCOVERY OF THREE NEW GERMS BY THE
AUTHOR.

THE germs of disease gave a ball. Everybody knows that many diseases are caused by very minute organised bodies which enter the system, multiply in the blood and tissues, and so irritate the body that derangement and fever are the result. These particles are called germs, bacteria, or micro-organisms. Thousands may enter the body simultaneously, and produce sufficient poison therein to kill the patient. On the other hand, when a patient recovers, the germs have been defeated and overcome by the resistance of the tissues. As races of men vary from each other in colour, size, habits, and intelligence, so do bacteria of different diseases vary in their characters and life history. Some micro-organisms are in the form of minute dots, and receive the name of cocci, others resemble tiny rods, and are called bacilli, others are spiral, like a corkscrew, and hence are termed spirilla.

This ball being a federation function, all sections of respectable and official bacteria were represented.

Some germs showed as much envy and snobbishness as Christians do. Many put on an awful lot of side, even going so far in arrogance as to screw their lower jaws round, cock their chins in the air, and remain speechless when casually addressed. A strange feature, much commented on, was an announcement in the germ newspapers that no germs would be admitted without presenting cards of invitation!



SPIRILLA OF RELAPSING FEVER. 500 to 1,500 of these microbes to an inch in length.

Dear old Sydney, did 'um do it often then? No doubt questionable gay sparks and ladies, who would-if-they-could, were very much put out by such impertinence. The germ larrikin pushes, whose prototypes flourished at Chowder and elsewhere in days of yore, were equally disappointed, for, instead

of being allowed to play up Old Harry, they were kept in order by the presence of Sergeant Q. Beba, Constable Cop, and Detective Hydra. The Johnny Coccus talent in particular was very indignant at the sight of a correctionary force, and retired in high dudgeon. It was wise. Oh, so wise.

The ball room itself was appropriately decorated with festoons and garlands of myrtles. The vice-regal dais looked lovely embellished with the Royal Coat of Arms, made in gelatine and lime, and exhibiting the invincible device of a monarch who has never been dethroned—the skull and cross bones. Banners, flags and shields were displayed in profusion, and bore records and dates of many devastating epidemics. The anatomical names in Latin of different parts that had succumbed to the ravages of obscure disease were worked in Chinese silk and brilliantly illuminated by glow worms. Emblems of forlorn hopes glittered in ghastly grey on the walls and thrilled the martial ardour of sprouting spores. In the recesses were statues of ancient warrior bacteria who had carried off the patriarchs of mediæval history; busts of micro-organisms of patriotic inspiration who had killed the professional politician even at the moment that he drew his pay in bank notes. A ball room tasteful, grand, harmonious. Oh, what must it have been to have been there! Man, in his narrow-minded presumption, fancies he is the Alpha and Omega of the Universe, not of the solar system

alone, but of the universe itself. Bacteriology, or the scientific study of germs, teaches him his insignificance in the mighty Universe, and when in the fulness of time the laurel wreath of victory shall be allotted to the victor, man will stand thunderstruck, discarded, ignored and uncrowned.

The attendance of guests at the ball was large. The usher, whose face suggested he had practised



BACILLUS OF ANTHRAX. 3,000, end on, measure an inch.

long at the bar, announced the visitors as they entered. Let us watch the process for a few minutes.

"Mr. and Mrs. Bacillus Tuberculosis" (the germs of consumption), cried he, in stentorian tones, and the reception committee curved their backs and bowed low to a pale, straight-laced, rod-shaped party who passed into the hallowed atmosphere.

Mrs. Pneumococcus (germ of inflammation of the lung), a fat, round little podge of a woman, like a dumpling, sat chatting with her friend Mrs. Bronchitis who reclined upon the same settee.

"My dear," said she, "I cannot understand the Tuberculoses at all. They are greatly overrated organisms. They only settle a thousand people a year in New South Wales, and yet they are



BACILLUS OF CONSUMPTION. From 7,000 to 10,000 in line to an inch.

thought so much of; whilst you and I, my dear, between us, run into and lay low over fifteen hundred saintly souls per annum. Although our trade is 50 per cent. more effective, we are almost ignored in society. For myself, you know how I thrive and delight in westerly winds of a biting character, and I cannot exist unless there be oxygen in the air in plenty. Even now, sitting in

a fearful draught from a window, and without a cloak, it seems stuffy to me. Yet my pretensions are scarcely recognised, whilst the fragile Tuberculoses are made so much of. Three of their children whilst accidentally walking across a sun-beam the other day were struck down dead. They cannot tolerate sunlight; it is death to them."



SAMPLE OF COCCI AND DIPLOCOCCI FOUND IN DIPHThERIA.

"I am not surprised to hear you complain," replied Mrs. Bronchitis; "the Consumptions always die in sunshine. Their family was prosperous in the time when mortals showed their spleen and animosity by drinking each other's beer and such like gentlemanly behaviour."

"Major Bacillus Lepræ (germ of leprosy), no wife, no children, no poor relatives at all," shouted the usher. All germs within earshot turned and stared as rudely as is correct form on such occasions.

"Fancy," said one gushing damsel to another, "the Major exists outside a human body. It is most unique. He really must be the only germ in the family who can do so."

"Yes," replied her hearer, "scientists tried to lodge him in a Government billet by lodging him in people's flesh, but their efforts have always been futile. It was immaterial whose body they innoculated with him, he invariably became inert. To look at he is a straight rod-shaped fellow, exactly like the Consumptions. But they disown him, and he repudiates all relationship with them. I hear he is quite a Government pet in New South Wales. Keeps the ignorant people in a mortal funk, and they are so humbugged about him that the Government can maintain a delightful establishment that is of service for their *protégés*."

"The tribe of Poxes," cried the usher, "Sir Small-pox, Captain and Miss Chicken-pox, Mr. Pock, Mrs. Pox, and Master Pox." The Poxes sauntered in, in lazy style, but instantly bucked up on catching sight of their cousin, Miss Vaccine, who was fanning herself under an evergreen. The venom of their hatred was obvious. To be candid, the microbes of small-pox took no pains to conceal

their enmity to the germs of vaccination, who were in the same line of business, as the latter had ruined the Poxes by underselling, cutting prices, and cash payments. The venerable aristocratic micro-organisms of small-pox had drawn princely incomes for centuries from their pits, and would still have been the flower of old nobility and the bulwark of blue blood in germs had it not been for the mushroom peerage, sham genteel, parvenu brood of vaccine germs, who, backed by Jenner, were allowed to foist their filthy shoddy on mankind through open ports, free trade, the abolition of protective tariffs, and class monopoly. Hence arose a vendetta, or blood feud, between them. The only branch of the family that escaped hostility was the young, weakly, innocent-looking, boyish germ, Mr. Never-Kill-Chicken-Pox. Being infectious, he claimed kinship with the turbulent scions of the family, but never having done any harm, he was ignored by the press.

"The Influenza School again," growled the usher, as a swarm of undersized insignificant germs crowded into the doorway. They were favourites with the bullies of disease, as after they had attacked human beings they left so many openings for their *confrères* of a more virulent type. The Watery Coryzas (germs of cold in the head), who were mostly J.P.'s, followed in the wake of the Influenzas.

"The Bicycle Fever Germ," shrieked the usher.

The effect was similar to an explosion of dynamite in the building. The police rushed in a body to seize the intruder. The germ reception committee bristled up their feathers like fowls in a riot. Germs in maddened fury struggled and fought with each other in the stampede to the doors to be the first to strike the invader. Every eye blazed hatred. Every voice was raised in menace and denunciation.



A HARMFUL GERM FOUND IN BLOOD-POISONING.

"Back, back, you villain," they shouted. "Down with the pest. Death to the Cycle germ. Heavens! to think that such a dastardly enemy to all disease should dare to intrude here."

And sorely battered, punched and bleeding, the Bicycle germ was ignominiously pitched into the gutter, like a pot-house brawler. Many wished to follow and finish him off there and then, once and

for all. They were restrained, however, by the intercession of the older bacteria. It was long before the equanimity of the germs could be restored.

The poor battered bicycle fever germ condoled himself, and crawled to a part of the road formed of clay binding, and purposely made slippery and dangerous to all traffic by water-carts. "That was pretty rough handling," he mused. "I think I will rest here for a time in a safe place. He who seeks me now must risk his neck on this road to reach me.



BICYCLE FEVER GERM DISCOVERED BY THE AUTHOR.

Highly infectious !

I might have known, though, it was rather venture-some to go to their filthy ball, but I thought that having destroyed so much disease the remaining bacteria would have been afraid of me and knuckled down."

"Miss *Diplococcus Diptheriæ*," announced the usher.

"Now, this is something like a visitor," said a microbe who had been foremost in his attack on the

Cycle germ. "She is an ornament to every fruit shop and stagnant pool."

Looking into the vestibule, where light refreshments were served, a little crowd, which resisted removal, was observed round the ice creams and fruit. They constituted the recently presented at Court—germs of cholera. Their partiality for ice puddings dated from the time when an American professor killed thirteen of his guests by mixing these germs in the ices just to learn how effective they were served up in this way. Before this advent they harvested in fruit. Next to the Choloras stood the Infusoria, an odd-shaped lot whose pedigree dates back farther than any other in scientific genealogy. They swarm in soups, &c. A mongrel breed, and utterly unlike such a swell as the Hon. Spirilla-Anthrax, whose lineage is of the purest, and whose escutcheon has never been sullied. Anthrax rightly prides himself on always being able to produce splenic fever in cattle or man. He boasted that, though buried in fields for years, yet he is able to germinate as soon as the soil is turned up and he is given a chance in man or other beast. The purity of his breeding and his corkscrew shape distinguish him from all others.

Mrs. Erysipelas looked charming, blushing in marone plush. Miss Bloated Measles received marked attention. Miss Mumps was much admired for the amount of her cheek.

Next the dust-box, behind the refreshment table, lounged the *Bacillus* of Typhoid Fever. Soliloquising, he said :

“ I believe in dirt and squalor. There is much profit to be made from it. Many fortunes also in refuse. Strong-smelling clothes, plenty of moisture, personal neglect, dirty nails, and foul gutters are excellent environments for my children. Let them try as much as they like, they will never do without my trade. The common, thriftless herd will always abound.” Then he subsided and watched the others feed.

In faithfully reporting some of the proceedings of this ball I am sorry to have to confess that my scientific colleagues have not yet isolated all the germs of infectious diseases. All noxious germs have not yet been revealed. At the germ ball were countless swarms of bacteria of importance, of power, of wondrous influence, most beautiful to look at—micro-organisms that might make a premier writhe and squirm and change the fiscal policy of a nation—germs that few men have ever dreamt of and scientists in their prosy way have never yet identified. I, a poor humble medico, have the good fortune to announce to the world, the flesh, and the other fellow, that I have managed to discover another germ that has been overlooked. Its influence in life is felt by all ; but presumably, from its profusion and cosmopolitan character, it has until now been quite unheeded.

Gentlemen who concoct cablegrams for England and foreign soil are at liberty to wire the extraordinary discovery and retain the honour for Australia.

At first sight the germ of which I speak (welcome, little stranger!) looked like a mass of tinsel and gauze, fluffy and soft, seductive and beautiful!



GERM OF LOVE, also unearthed by the Author, who is proof against this disease in every shape.

Beautiful!! Appealing strongly to the animal senses—the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the touch. Hidden and wrapped in a number of clouds and furs, it fascinated the imagination and rivetted the attention on the precious core within—smothered to invisibility, and hence doubly incom-

prehensible. As the germ moved about its draperies were displaced, and revealed the most graceful outlines and surpassing elegancies. Each rustle of silk, each fold of lace, disseminated waves of subdued enchanting music. Every current of air carried away vague blends of Eastern perfumes of alluring influence. Probably some of the stuff Cleopatra chained Antony with! Each breath stimulated the gustatory nerves. Each touch was sufficient to induce a mild attack of convulsions. The influence of this strange germ was patent everywhere. All others bowed in homage. She was, indeed, if of the feminine gender—and you will take my word for it that such was the case—the belle of the ball—a perfect queen among the bacteria. Like most of the same sex she became most attractive when smothered with the greatest amount of unnecessary garments and finery. Powdered, rouged, decorated and adorned in the most lavish and fascinating manner it is possible for a wild imagination to conceive, yet this germ, externally so perfect, was in reality within a very bad egg. It was the Germ of Love. Occupying her proper status in bacteriology amongst the other infectious diseases, her pernicious influence is apparent wherever a woman is to be seen. Once inoculated with this germ a man loses his senses; his reason is unseated; his judgment is in abeyance; his mind is deranged; he makes an awful fool of himself. Age affords no safeguard from infection. Boys, young men, middle-aged men, old men,

are equally susceptible to attack. Men boasting for scores of years of their immunity from this disorder eventually are infected and become the biggest asses of the lot. No wonder, then, this micro-organism was received with such grave reverence, such profound homage. The most infectious of all infectious diseases readily conceded precedence to such a disease. Far and away worse than scarlatina, yet very much like it, and somehow allied to it in Natural History. The analogy is patent by comparing the two.

Either germ having settled on to its victim lies dormant in the body for a varying period of time. Scarlet fever may produce its first symptom in its victim in twenty-four hours, or it may lie dormant for as long as eight days. Love may strike one silly in less than twenty-four hours, or it may take longer than eight days to accomplish its fell design. Doctors term this period of latency the time of incubation—the time it takes to hatch the germ. Nice old brood at the end of it all, too! Then in scarlet fever the patient is sick and feels very feverish. In love he is very sick indeed, and feels very feverish.

Within a day or two of this the scarlet fever rash appears upon the skin. In love, the patient is all rashness, and may break out at any time and anywhere. Some old dotards have been known to come out in real red blotches and required the application of ice to their bald heads. In both diseases the pulse

runs high, the tongue is coated, sometimes covered with fearful lies, and there is distaste for food. In scarlatina slight nocturnal delirium is not at all uncommon. In love, it is all delirium, nocturnal and diurnal too, and very little sleep. In both, the system is borne down and prostration and langour are marked. In scarlatina, when the case is doing badly, the prostration and debility increase. In love, the patient becomes equally incapable of exertion. Listlessness is typical of the disorders. The victim moves without exhibiting energy; ordinary exciting incidents of life do not arrest his attention, but a little piece of sable, a farthing's worth of ribbon, a whiff of patchouli, is quite sufficient to raise the temperature, cause palpitation of the heart, and produce a severe spasm. The sight of a decayed tooth, which resembled the decayed tooth in the body from which the germs emanated, has been known to cause a cold shiver to run down the patient's spine. Complications such as disease of the heart are common to both diseases.

The attack does not subside by crisis, that is, suddenly, but in the most favourable cases where ultimate recovery may be hoped for, the defervescence is by lysis, that is, gradual subsistence. In both instances the skin comes off and you are fleeced. The greatest care is necessary for at least six weeks after the appearance of the eruption.

As a person may have a second or third attack of

small-pox, which may prove fatal, so may he have a second or third attack of love. The subsequent attacks are usually of a milder type. After ten or twelve attacks the disease is trivial in character and no serious complications result. Medical remedies need not be urged upon the patient then.

Marriage only confers slight immunity. I know what I am talking about. Cases are recorded of old men of seventy or eighty years of age who have developed the disorder. Infection in such cases can usually be traced to a juvenile pabulum, a young bit of muck. A photograph of such cases shows senility and juvenility linked together in a grotesque attitude. The man and the maid.

During the decline of a fever, much can be done to hasten a cure. Nevertheless, taken altogether the period of convalescence is sometimes extremely costly. Then a man would like to kick himself and a woman has a period of sanity or a lucid interval.

The similarity of symptoms produced by the Love Germ and those produced by other disease germs is more apparent the more the subject is investigated. Love possesses all the features of an infectious disease manifesting itself primarily in derangement of the mental faculties and secondarily in disorder of the body.

Such, then, is a faithful and accurate description of the second new germ which has been announced to the world by the publication of this essay.

At this moment the band struck up the Germ National Anthem, which resembled the Dead March in Saul with variations. All eyes mechanically turned to the door to watch the vice regal party enter. Soon afterwards the first set of Lancers was formed and consisted of:—His Excellency and Lady Love, General Lockjaw (a germ living in garden mould and entering the blood through a dirty cut) with



THE THIRD GERM OF DISEASE DISCOVERED BY THE AUTHOR.
No measurement possible.

Mrs. Staphylococcus Pyogenes (germs of blood poisoning); Admiral Ague and Miss Bacillus Ophthalmiæ Neonatorii (germ of sore eyes in babies); Sir Diplococcus Diphtheriæ and the Dowager Typhus herself.

One other germ of disease which I claim to have discovered, yet remains for me to mention, as he was present at the Germ Ball. He was the Gambling Germ. A fearful looking rascal, being a mixture of greed and laziness. One hand on one side of his body resembles Uncle Lombard's sign, three gilt balls; the other hand looks like a tightly-closed fist, which wishes to retain everything it can grasp.

This concludes the report of the most fashionable ball of the season.

THE MYSTERY OF SALAMBOO.

CHAPTER I.

"ANOTHER weary week," said Miss Senn to her brother, as they walked through the dirty slums of Seven Dials towards the West End of London.

"Perhaps so," replied her brother; "who knows? It is twenty-five to eight, Edith, we have plenty of time. There is no necessity to hurry."

They had almost reached their destination when the number of people all journeying in the same direction attracted their attention.

"Burnt clean out," said a man to his mate.

"Nothing left," replied his fellow.

"What does it mean?" said Miss Senn.

"Seems strange," rejoined her brother.

In five minutes they knew what it meant, for a barricade across the road checked their further progress, and a *posse* of police barred the way. Senn and his sister duly accredited passed the barrier, and proceeded to a temporary office in an adjacent house, where the officials of the firm of Salamboo & Co. met their employees and related the extent of their

disaster. The factory had been burnt to the ground on Saturday night.

"It is a loss of ten thousand pounds at least, if they are fully insured," said Miss Senn.

"Yes," said her brother.

"You don't seem to care much."

"Why should I?" he replied; "what is it to me?"

"Why, it's your living and mine," said Miss Senn. "Now we shall very likely be without any means of earning a living for months. How stupidly you talk, Hector!"

"I don't see that at all. If we lose a few weeks' work he loses thousands."

"He—who?" enquired Miss Senn.

"Why, Salamboo's," snapped her brother.

"That won't benefit us."

"It won't do us any harm, though, except for the loss of our wages."

"But the factory is in ruins," protested Miss Senn.

"All the better, let it be in ruins," said her brother. And they walked back home again.

CHAPTER II.

MONTHS elapsed, and Salamboo & Co. were in full activity again. Senn and his sister having breakfasted as usual one Thursday morning, were prepared to start for their work, when a newsboy,

passing the end of the dismal turning in which brother and sister resided, raised his cry so loudly that it caught the ear of Miss Senn.

"What's that he says?" she cried.

"Burnt out again," carelessly rejoined her brother. "We must go down and buy a paper, Edith, and then walk on to the factory."

"Hector, you don't mean to say Salambo's is burnt again?"

"Well, that's what the boy vociferates. I can't say, Edith. I shouldn't be surprised though. Come on, let's hear the news. Perhaps it's only next door, or a sweet-stuff shop at the back, that has suffered by the flames."

"Oh Hector! I can't, my heart beats so. Go—go and get a paper. I shall faint."

"Sit down, Edith, poor child, and I will go," said Senn, with a display of more affection than he had hitherto shown. "Don't let a small thing like that disturb you."

He returned with the morning paper; there was the account in detail. Salambo's premises closed. At six o'clock Wednesday evening, apparently safe and secure. The night watchman was prepared to swear that everything was free from danger at 8 o'clock. At 9, however, to his astonishment, flames burst forth from the front windows of the upper stories and rapidly enveloped the buildings. The night watchman, chatting to a constable, was the

first to see it. The firemen were certain it must have been alight for nearly an hour before it was noticed. Impossible to have secured such a hold under that time. A woman living in a garret at the rear of the factory saw smoke issuing from that which she believed to be a chimney about half-past eight, but which, undoubtedly, was the smoke of the fire burning in the basement or lower floors. The premises, specially constructed with fire-proof doors and thin sheet-iron between each ceiling and floor to prevent draught and flames from spreading from room to room, had succumbed so rapidly and inexplicably to the devastating power that Salambo's was a mass of charred ruins before midnight. No salvage worth looking at.

During the conflagration the crowd was so great that the work of extinction was much impeded.

Subsequently great excitement prevailed at the barricades amongst sight-seers, as this was the second fire within ten months, and it was understood little or no insurance had been effected on the factory. The extent of destruction brought forth many strange remarks.

"Them steam fire-engines ain't no use," said the man on the corner, bidding defiance by his tone and gesture to everybody in general; "when they only throw water to the roof of a two-story house, and this 'ere place ran up to six or seven."

"Was you here and see it?" said the habitual soaker.

"My oath, was I 'ere when it broke out? Course I was." And he spat on the pavement. "Them steamers ain't no use when they keeps the same size now as when they was first invented and the 'ouses a keeps on growing bigger and bigger. 'Tain't likely they would be. In Chicago, in 'Meriky, their 'ouses is twenty odd stories high, and they don't waste time a putting of 'em out. They lets 'em burn, same as this one done."

"Didn't they pump water on this place, same as they're doing now?" enquired the soaker.

"No fear. 'Ow could they get near it? They just stands, a couple of dozen of 'em, just at danger line from the walls and squirts the water across the street. It don't go into the factory, not a drop of it, 'less they gets up on the roof of the next house or somewheres across the street. I've seen plenty of fires. The police shoves you right back, then twenty steamers comes tearing down and the firemen shouting and screeching one to the other, and they keeps on a whistling and the blaze roars out of the funnels, the sparks flies and the engines pants and you'd think they were putting out all the fires in the world. The water comes down the streets in torrents and everything is afloat and wet through, bar the house on fire. Hardly any water goes on *that*. In a fire like this they never get near it. On a small 'ouse they can get up close and chuck it in at the windows, but they can't do nothing with a big one. When the

people gets up to the ruins next day, they sees every jet pumping on them everywhere, 'cos it's all flat down in a heap and they can walk over it. Except a few walls as feel lonely like and want to topple over. You hear the women a-saying, 'My word, don't they do it nobby with them garden hose.' I hear one cove the other day who'd never been out of his own street, most likely, saying his warehouse was c'lossal."

"What's that?" asked the soaker.

"C'lossal—why colossal, and it 'ad four floors, one atop of the other. That's what he called c'lossal. First I thought he was a fireman a talking of his engine.

"Then I see he weren't. My word, he ought to have been in the States, then he'd know what c'lossal was, and he wouldn't have so much conceit. He's very likely one of the fire brigade's board and orders them fire squirts which are now about forty years behindhand. Can't keep up in the running."

"Wasn't them engines no use, then?" said the habitual soaker.

"No—no more than if I'd spit on it;" and he used his own fire engine in illustration. "They wants an engine what 'ud wash the top of St. Paul's, if they want to put a fire out. The engines turn out sharp enough and tear down at a gallop."

"They don't take long to reach the fire."

"I know they don't. That's right enough, but

when they get there they can't do much, as they haven't got the proper engines; so they turns the hose on the crowd to keep it from seeing too much of what they can't do."

Having delivered himself of this harangue he stuck his hands in his pockets, and moved to another point of observation.

Edith Senn, in their apartments, still listened to the account of the fire as her brother read it to her. When he had concluded she sobbed out:—

"Oh, Hector! this is dreadful. How could it have occurred? We shall be out of work again for some time, and it is—it is *dreadful*. Hector, it is *dreadful*."

"Poor Edith!" said Hector, as he nursed the sobbing girl to his shoulder; "don't cry. It's not our property that has gone. The owners can well afford to lose it. Buoyed up by arrogance and hauteur, let them feel the pinch of poverty as we have felt it, Edith dear."

"Oh! don't speak like that, Hector," protested Edith.

"Why not?" he asked. "Let such cursed purse-proud fiends writhe and squirm, and learn that others are human as well as they."

"Hector, look at the terrible loss. There is no insurance on the factory, and it was worth fifty thousand pounds. I am so sorry for them. Oh, Hector! it is *dreadful*."

"You need not be sorry, Edith dear, the loss to them can easily be recovered by our labour, and why; indeed, should you grieve. You above all women; didn't the dastards insult you, my poor beautiful sister. Wasn't it the wealth and show that gave them power? Let them have their turn, and serve them right. I am glad it is burnt down, and I hope it will be burnt down every time it is rebuilt. Curse them."

"Don't, Hector!"

"Curse them, high and low, now and always. May the curse of the injured"—and Senn raised his clenched fist on high—"never leave them."

"Oh, Hector! don't, don't talk like that, you make my blood run cold," and she placed her fair hands over his mouth to check his speech. "Never mind my wrong, Hector, it has passed. Forget it, dear, as I do."

"Never," he retorted fiercely. His face paled and a sullen fierce light burned in his eyes, and made his sister tremble. "It hasn't passed, and it never will pass whilst Salamboo's prosper. Curse the foul hounds. Never!"

"Pray don't talk like that, Hector, or I must go to my room. Some one will overhear you, and it will bring trouble to us. You quite frighten me; pray, Hector, do be quiet."

"Yes, I will be quiet, sister mine," he said, as he drew her closely to him and caressed her cheek. "I

will say no more, Edith dear, but I am glad, very glad." And he slowly kissed her forehead.

"Hector," said Edith, "your passion unnerves me, do try and restrain yourself. Sometimes I think you must be ill when you break out in such tempers. It only makes things worse, going on in that way. Salamboo's are in trouble and we should commiserate with them, not rejoice over it."

"Edith, I would sooner stand in the midst of the blaze whilst the place burnt down, than let them go on. I would welcome the flames of hell were Salamboo's the fuel. I live only for you, Edith, my poor, gentle Edith."

"Hector, I don't know, but a vague dread haunts me, I hope it is not so, but a suspicion—"

Brother and sister gazed long and searchingly into each other's eyes, then Miss Senn turned deadly faint and collapsed. Her brother, exhibiting the greatest solicitude and tenderness, carried her to a couch.

He was a man about twenty-eight years of age, of average height and weight; fair physique; light hair and grey eyes. Not over robust, but possessed of a sullen determination and power of application that should have been of value in the markets of the world. That it was not so probably arose from lack of opportunity. Reared in a lowly condition, his abilities had never been adequately directed, but smouldered as a semi-dormant danger.

Edith Senn, his only sister, was a woman younger

than he, graceful in form and of fair stature. Her features, clear cut and refined, were, if anything, rather too delicate, yet the expression of mental alertness was so keen it added a special attraction to her face. Full brown eyes and regular teeth added to the charm of symmetry so characteristic of her face. She was a faithful sister, living a life of devotion to a sullen brother.

CHAPTER III.

REGINALD W. HENNIKON, with eyes fixed on the floor and hands clasped behind his back, walked restlessly up and down his elaborately upholstered study. He was sorely perplexed. His face wore a haggard and weary expression. Trouble clouded his brow. He was a shift, crafty-looking man, selfish to the backbone, and unscrupulous when necessary; a man who never ought to have been fortunate enough to wield the power that money places in the hands of a man. Short, quick in movement, and slight, he had the agility of a panther combined with the ferocity of a tiger.

"I would give half the remainder," he said to himself; "to discover who did it. I wonder who did it? What villain is lying in wait for me? I can't surmise. How is it possible to pick him out of *hundreds* who are there all day. What clue is he to

be detected by? Who amongst the lot nurses up such a revenge? Those who might have such a feeling I take good care never have the opportunity to gratify it. It takes more than one mouse to hurt me. This is no mouse, but a deep designing schemer. By someone's machinations I am twenty-five thousand pounds poorer to-night than I was yesterday morning. And no comfort even to learn who did it. I am sick of the string of detectives who interview me. A lot of boobies who have to be told who the criminal is before they suspect him. Not *one* in a hundred of them can ferret out an irregular case. Taken off the beaten track they are lost. The same old groove with nearly all of them. The same sickening stock questions.

"Do I suspect anyone? The *fools*, I suspect *the whole lot*. Everybody. Every man in the same trade feels aggrieved at my manufactures—hates me. Every hand who has been caught loafing and been reprimanded for it, nourishes a grudge against me. What rubbish to send such a lot to me. What *nonsense* talking. Asking me to point out the incendiary when it is their business to point him out *to me*. A lot of asses.

"Had I any warning that could lead me to suppose enemies were active? *Fools*. If I had any idea who were the perpetrators I shouldn't want their help. Now the mischief is done, it is not much use watching. No insurance this time. That is one comfort

in one respect. I shall not be the subject of the inuendoes of those brainless thieves who eternally think a man burns his place down to take their money to rebuild it with.

“There are very *few* insurance offices that don't imagine they are the victims of a swindle when a claim is made on them for loss by fire. At any rate, I shall not have to put up with *their* insolence. And no insurance next time if the desperadoes are not caught and come at me again. All the greater incentive to this class of incendiary. I shall have to do *something* more to protect myself, but the difficulty is to know what to do. My partners cannot suggest anything. Neither can they withdraw from the concern and leave me alone after this misadventure, as their only hope to recoup themselves is to remain in.

“I wonder who *my partners'* enemies are? Why not follow *them* up?—hunt round *their* friends and acquaintances, and find out *their* black sheep? It is just as likely this business is aimed at them as at me. Why should it be assumed that I am the culprit who causes the downfall? Only, I suppose, because I have more brains than all the others put together. No man knows all his enemies, nor yet a twentieth part of them. People make themselves our enemies without the least ground for legitimate hostility. These, added to those who might reasonably be expected to dislike us, constitute an enormous power

which *every man* of any status in life has to contend against.

"How my head splits! This worry is more than a man can stand. I must have more brandy or I shall never sleep."

With this remark Reginald W. Hennikon strode over to a tantalus and helped himself to a full quantity of liquor.

"Now I am steadier," he mused, "I must consider what action to take to restore the business premises again. There is no real surety against an enemy whilst there are inflammable goods in the factory, that is *certain*. If there be stuff to burn it will be *burnt* at the first opportunity. Consequently the opportunities must be few and far between, and supervision, watching, examination and investigation must be perpetual. That is another certainty. Beyond this the goods must be stored in small sections or departments, cut off and isolated as far as possible from each other. Division of bulk lessens the danger. By this means a fire in one section may be limited to that section alone, and, moreover, the work of detection is infinitely easier. The fewer *employés* in any department the more facilities there are to find the criminals. The new factory shall be cut up into twenty blocks and separated by iron passages and iron doors."

Then Reginald W. Hennikon, his brain busy with architecture, helped himself to another glass of spirit-

and-water, turned out the gas, and went slowly up-stairs to bed.

CHAPTER IV.

SALAMBOO'S, risen once more from its ashes, like a Phoenix, again exhibited a hive-like activity. The *employés* seemed satisfied and happy as usual—that is, as happy as workpeople are who never dream of hope of advancement beyond the routine of daily toil—the state of workpeople whose only anxiety, if they ever be troubled with any, is that they may not retrogress. Having attained maximum pay and the highest grade their limited division of labour entitles them to, possibly they are right in deciding it is barren thought to contemplate promotion, which from the nature of their work is unattainable in that sphere. The longer they continue factory hands the more machine-like they become. Senn and his sister would have followed the same career had it not been for circumstances which unfold themselves in this tale. The day's routine finished, Senn discarded the ordinary relaxation and recreation of his comrades and indulged in study. Returning to his home he became engrossed in the depths of science. His bedroom and the common sitting-room of himself and his sister assumed the appearance of a chemical laboratory. Chemical substances,

apparatus and bottles of reagents littered the apartments. Notes and papers recording chemical equations strewed the furniture. From the richness in chemicals and the poverty in furniture, Senn must have been more deeply interested in study than in personal comfort. General economy was raised to a fine art to pay for chemicals. To those of small means daily experiments in chemical synthesis are a somewhat expensive luxury. The Senns found it so. Miss Senn, in devotion to her brother, curtailed her wants to furnish money for his studies. The apartments reeked with the odour of chemicals. Nitric acid evolved a few bright red tell-tale spots on Senn's trousers. The various tints of his fingers were due to similar causes. Body, clothes, and furniture all suffered.

At length Senn's moody disposition underwent a change. He became almost jubilant and cheerful. Ordinary annoyances were ignored. His affection for his sister increased. His alacrity in factory work never flagged. Poorer than ever, more seedy in dress and more needy in pocket, Senn's spirits rose as he sank lower in worldly wealth.

On one occasion Miss Senn, returning late in the evening, entered the room which was almost in total darkness and found Senn indulging in a quiet little self-satisfied laugh.

"What are you enjoying so much in the dark, Hector?" said she; "have you something very nice to eat?"

"Nothing to eat," he replied. "As you opened the door and reduced the temperature, we must wait five minutes more before you will observe the beauty of this experiment. It is rather old now, but I sometimes enjoy practising it over again."

They waited in the gas glimmer for five minutes, then a pile of matches flared up in ignition.

"I suppose that's all it comes to Hector, is it?"

"Yes, that is it. You can turn up the gas. I have sat for three hours in the dark waiting for this."

"Well, tell me what it all means," said Edith.

"I will explain it to you, Edith. Here burns a small jet such as is furnished by any gas-stove or gas-burner turned down very low. The flame is practically indistinguishable in daylight.

"In a still atmosphere a conducting slip of sheet iron of No. 12 gauge of this size will cause the temperature at the end of the iron farthest from the flame to rise to 350° Fahr. in half-an-hour. In a draught or light wind the temperature will not rise to that height at all. Stillness of air is essential. Your entry into the room delayed the operation five minutes. If the experimenter desire to delay heating the effective end of the iron for, say, an hour or two, he can accomplish his purpose by means of this check well which is soldered on to the iron far from the gas jet. According to the delay required, so will the well be filled up with water to a measured depth. If you require one hour's delay, only fill it

up one-fourth. If you require two hours' delay, fill it half full. If you require three hours' delay, fill it three-quarters full, and so on. This furnishes a certain means of checking the rise of temperature for a definite time in the effective end of the iron beyond the well. All the well water must evaporate before the heat can travel from one end of the iron to the other to raise it to 350° Fahr.

"Matches of different makers ignite at various temperatures according to their chemical components and according to intimacy of contact with the metal. The matches of the firm which I patronise ignite at a temperature of 350° Fahr., and I like them. They are very nicely made. This plate of iron is raised in temperature to the combustion point of the matches I am fond of in three hours when the well is three-quarters full of water.

"Had you not entered the room at the moment you did, the four boxes of matches would have flared up within one minute. Your entrance at the moment cooled the iron and saved the matches for four minutes more. It is very simple."

"Yes, so I see," said Edith ; " but what is the use of it all ? "

"Use," laughed Senn ; " what is the use of anything ? "

"To go to such a lot of trouble to burn a box of matches is so ridiculous, Hector. One can light a fire without all that rigmarole."

"Not always," replied Senn.

Hector Senn, deeply immersed in his studies, became more expert and ingenious as time went on. His experiments were endless and necessitated the addition to his *répertoire* of a few tools and a vice.

The purchase of a fireclay furnace was an expensive item. Seven weeks' pinching and saving from their small income provided enough money to pay for it.

It was a great advent in the study of chemistry.

"It makes me independent of these cheeky chemical manufacturers," explained Senn to his weary sister; "I can now comfortably study the compounds of phosphorus, which are most remarkable when skilfully applied to the arts."

"Is it very dangerous stuff to have about the place?" enquired Miss Senn.

"Yes," returned Hector, "it is; but kept in a suitable vessel under water, no danger arises from it."

"Oh! you must be careful, then, to see it is always covered."

"The curious part of the affair, though, is that when phosphorus is combined with such a base as calcium it must be kept free from all moisture, otherwise it will undergo combustion. Phosphide of calcium instantly decomposes when placed in water, and burns with a great flare and great fury. Those three old meat-tins on the side of the stove are full of it. It would never do to place them in a

sink with a leaky tap and a closed waste-pipe. As soon as the water rose sufficiently high in the sink to run into the tins the stuff would be alight."

"I suppose the flame would spread from one to the other," said Miss Senn.

"Not necessarily," said her brother; "if the three tins stood in three different sinks in three different places, and the water in each reached the tins at the same moment, they would burn simultaneously but separately. The more water there was thrown on the compound, the more it would burn. See?"

Miss Senn said she thought she saw.

CHAPTER V.

MR. HENNIKON sat in an arm-chair in conversation with Inspector Slowon, of the Criminal Investigation Department. Slowon was one of those men who had risen from the ranks by constant plodding attention to the irksome duties of detective work. Removed from the false glamour of romance which fiction authors usually cast round them, the duties are always tedious and dull. Even in the highest grades there is an undue leaven of weariness, watching and waiting. Waiting an hour at a street corner for a girl who does not keep her appointment is nothing to it.

Inspector Slowon had served a long apprenticeship

in detection. Owing to his known astuteness in tracking down many tricky evaders of the law, he was deputed to investigate the third mysterious fire at Salambo's factory. He was prepared to follow every trail with the perseverance of a sleuth hound. Nothing would be thought too slow or laborious as long as it led to victory. But he required some scent to follow, and that is where he was baffled.

"This is a very strange business," said the inspector, "and I fail to see where we are to look for a clue, unless you can furnish us with one. Incidents of the past might have led to this, Mr. Hennikon, and if you have no particular reason to keep any matter secret, a brief sketch of your career might lead me to think of a possible cause for the enmity. I have no *desire* for your confidence; it is a matter *entirely* for *yourself*, with this reservation, that unless I know every point my task may be fruitless. All suspicious circumstances that present themselves to me will be fully investigated."

"I have nothing to tell you that, as far as I can judge, would throw the least light on the case," said Mr. Hennikon.

"Every individual *employé* cannot be followed about and his companions noted, but certainly all those whose conduct or habits have changed from the regular routine must be shadowed. I think you said there were only three people whom you thought it worth while enquiring about."

"That is all I can suggest at the present, and, as far as your investigations went, there was nothing suspicious in them, was there?"

"Nothing whatever. Wilson, who has been dressing more extravagantly than formerly, and spending a good deal of time at the billiard table, *did* inherit a few hundreds from a brother who died in Glo'ster. So the probability is that he spends that which he owns. It won't last much longer, though, and then we shall soon be able to see if he can continue in the same course without the legitimate source of wealth."

"Yes, and the next?" said Mr. Hennikon.

"Miss A. Shadler is a woman who might be led to do anything bad. Her fright at the news of the fire and the endless questions, she particularly asked whether any one was suspected, and how it originated, furnish a reason to enquire about her. You say she has been absent on several occasions before for a few days, and this time my assistants learn that she kept her room and was apparently ill. One day she was visited by four people the next by six, and they were a rather poor set. She certainly has a large circle of friends—far too many, in my opinion—though we found out nothing detrimental to them individually. Although she may be right herself, she may know some people who use her knowledge of the place to effect their crime. *That* is a possible source, and she must be kept under observation for a long time yet. One of our female detectives is

about to occupy a room in the same house, so we shall be able to thoroughly search all her boxes and so on before very long."

"Then about McMann?" said Mr. Hennikon.

"William McMann is a naturally disaffected *employé*, and always resents dictation. I do not think much of his grumbling. There is nothing known of him except that he attends every socialist meeting and every agitation movement. He is not intimate with those who are likely to be dangerous to property. He was away from home the whole night of the fire and all next day, and we don't know where he was. Two days later he changed his lodgings. Are there any others you have heard of?"

"I have enquired," replied Mr. Hennikon, "of every foreman and every head of department, and held several general investigations with all responsible members in the partnership, but nothing further has been elucidated. The factory closed at six, and the fire occurred about nine—almost the same hour as before. The watchmen saw nothing—they heard nothing. The fire must have originated at three different and distinct parts of the factory within, at any rate, a quarter of an hour of each other. It is unlikely a man would be foolhardy enough to go from place to place to set fire to the goods. He might be seen, or, more probably, encounter the watchmen. There is reason to believe

that whilst attention was concentrated on the first outbreak, the others must have been already alight, and that would bring the outbreak in the three sections almost to the same moment. It was the work of a gang, or, at least, three people simultaneously. Otherwise there is no way to account for three fires so far apart as to occupy considerable time in walking from place to place. Beyond these vague particulars we remain quite at fault."

The two men sat silent for a few moments. What Mr. Hennikon thought does not concern this tale. Inspector Slowon thought, "I wonder whether this man himself is at the bottom of it all and did it himself. I know more unlikely things than that."

Mr. Hennikon broke the silence.

"The reward is now at £2,000 for information leading to the detection of the actual perpetrators of the outrage. That ought to be enough to tempt one of these scoundrels to betray his accomplices. £2,000 and a free pardon."

"It seems not," said the inspector, "and that tends to show it is not the work of the regular criminal class. You are dealing with clever men who know as much as you do, and who have matured their plans in a perfect way. The fire-alarms were carefully eluded, and the watchmen might just as well have been at home as on duty. Have you received any communication that could give us a hint where to hunt?"

"No," returned Mr. Hennikon. "It is as great a mystery to me as to you. This is the third time, and so successful has it been that over £100,000 worth of goods are lost. All those complicated precautions are utterly futile. They may be of value against the commonplace incendiary, but they are worthless against this gang. Once alight there is positively no stopping the conflagration. I had the partition walls between the buildings—which, by the way, were 3 ft. 6 in. of solid brickwork—absolutely separated from each other by an open space of eighteen inches clear. But space or no space, the factory is gutted from end to end. Every gas connection was direct to the street main. Every water-pipe and fire-hose stand was separately laid to the different buildings so as to prevent the possibility of tampering with the supply. Two watchmen patrolled the inside perpetually, with half-hour inspection of each part of the premises, and one man was on duty outside the factory, and yet, hours after the factory is closed and all hands are gone, the whole place bursts out into flame. It is mysterious, incomprehensible!"

"They are no ordinary criminals, Mr. Hennikon, and their object is so obscure that it is difficult to know where to look for them. The sharpest gang I ever had to deal with, I'll admit."

"Where they will stop I cannot say, unless you can detect them at their work," said Mr. Hennikon. "My mind is already tortured to such a degree that

I fear it's overthrown. Night after night I am racked by the anxiety of not knowing who is striking these blows. The dread of fire is ever present with me. I start from my sleep hearing the imaginary cry of 'Fire' when no sound has disturbed the stillness of the night. I wake with a start fancying a bright light is before my eyes when darkness only prevails. The uncertainty and the mystery are enough to unnerve the strongest man. There is a difference in their plans each time, that sometimes I fancy some new gang has taken up the job each time."

"No, no," said the inspector; "it's the same gang of persons whoever they be, but they are very deeply and secretly in collusion."

"What makes you so sure of that?" asked Mr. Hennikon. "The work, as far as we can judge, is totally dissimilar."

"That may be so," replied Inspector Slowon, "but answer me, why should several people undertake the same sort of destruction? They cannot all have the same desire for revenge; and moreover, if they had such wish, it is highly improbable they would adopt the same mode of indulging it. The difficulty to carry out these nefarious designs is enormous. The obstacles are almost insurmountable with the safeguards you have established, and could not be surmounted by two or three separate gangs. Take my word for it, the brains that conceived the first fire,

about which we still are in doubt, thought out the second fire, and were the brains that planned and executed the third fire."

"You forget, Inspector Slowon, that example is very stimulating and suggestive with these miscreants. It is catching. Once having learnt the possibility of success, they are tempted to follow in the same career. Anyone feeling aggrieved against us instantly thinks of being revenged by burning us out."

"Against that," said the inspector, "I have to place the whole experience of all the police of the world and the known peculiarities of criminal characters. Men devote themselves to certain walks in crime and rarely change from them. Their modes of executing their special crimes are as firmly established as their bodily habits. They have a regular tell-tale trait of their handiwork, so that in most cases to see the evidence of their style of work in any great crime is to know that the enquiry can be confined to a small number of people who work in that peculiar manner. In this instance it is fire, fire, fire."

"Yes, that is strong presumptive evidence that the same gang did it all, but the execution of the work is different, and therefore I still doubt that one gang caused the whole three."

"That may be so," returned the inspector, "but the line of criminal action is so strongly established

in the individual that we rarely find him adopt much alteration. A criminal, and particularly a successful one, has no temptation to change his plan from that which he has found to answer so well in the first instance. And there are no signs in your case that the plan has been changed at all. All that you can see is that it is more complete than before and more destructive. It may be just the same plan over and over again. All such a gang would do would be to perfect their system and make it more effective each time, but the same groundwork will permeate the whole series. Habit is so great a part of a criminal's nature, that detection in thousands of cases would be absolutely impossible if the offenders' habits changed with the perpetration of the same form of crime. We in the police know it perfectly, and it leads us directly to our quarry. Where we fail in an instinctive habitual criminal—that is, a man who commits crime for a living, and not an accidental criminal who is a criminal by the pure accident of circumstances—we fail most often because of change of habit or custom in the offender. When they alter their modes of procedure we are completely thrown off the scent. Lombroso, Maudsley, Ferri, and other men who in recent years are undertaking the scientific investigation of criminology, have supported us in our conclusions that habit in crime is one of its chief features. They settle down to one form of crime and rarely change from it. A burglar is unlikely

to ever be anything else but a burglar ; he will not alter to a forger or coiner. The classes are quite distinct. A diamond robber would hardly be found running a still."

"These scoundrels are incendiaries though they may adopt different means in each case," asked Mr. Hennikon.

"Their way of working perhaps has altered. If, as *you suspect*, the same gang worked all through, and as *you think*, but which *I think* is very unlikely, their mode of action is altered on each occasion, all I have to say is you are dealing with a set of men equally clever with yourself, but having all the advantage of attack and time to cover their trail. Failing an accident or deliberate treachery of one of their number you will never find them out. The task is hopeless. The educated and accomplished swindler matures his plans for months, spends large sums of money in developing them, is never in a hurry to push his fraud, and finally goes for a great haul and in most cases gets it. The police cannot cope with such men. They are perfectly safe—barring an accidental breakdown in their project. Their chances of accidents are much more than those in legitimate transactions because of so many checks placed in the way to make it difficult to act irregularly. Beyond that, all I can say is, that the number of undiscovered crimes in any civilised city is enormous, and *they are proof* enough that the clever man easily evades the force."

"Well," languidly said Mr. Hennikon, "you'll have to do all that is possible in this case or it will drive me to destruction. No money need be spared. Succeed, and though it cost me my last cent I shall be satisfied. Once get hold of these villains and I will take good care they never escape my clutch."

"I suppose, Mr. Hennikon, there was no one whom you were intimate with in younger days who would be likely to entertain feelings of deadly animosity against you now—no vindictive person who could have founded a vendetta, if I may so term it?"

"None that I know of," replied Mr. Hennikon. "You have already seen my partners, and perhaps it would be as well to interview them again, as it may be directed as much against one of them as against me."

"Not so likely, considering you take the active management," said the inspector. "The enquiry is really cut down to the *employés*, as outsiders could never obtain sufficient access to the premises. Whilst not ignoring any outside hint, we must look particularly sharp after all hands in the works. I should like to hear all that goes on when you call the chiefs of the factory together for conference. Can you hide me somewhere where I could hear and not be seen again?"

"Yes," said Mr. Hennikon; "if you can creep into the lower part of these bookcases you will be able to listen then." And he walked over and exposed sufficient space for hiding the detective.

"That will do. Keep all of them here as long as possible. Make every man talk. Give them refreshments, and sit with your back to my hiding-place, so that in case of any accidental noise you can cover it by moving yourself about."

So it was arranged that Inspector Slowon was to take stock of everything that passed at a general conference of the departmental heads and foremen.

For two hours the inspector lay cramped up in considerable discomfort on cushions in his hiding-place and listening to all that transpired. At the end of that time, when the guests had departed, he emerged from his hiding place and confessed he had not heard anything of the remotest value as a clue.

All that then remained was to wait in the hope that a chapter of accidents might reveal the item of knowledge so much sought after.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Senns, brother and sister, resolved to move further east from their West End quarters in the Dials.

"I think it would be nicer," said Edith, "for us to live farther from the factory. The walk there and back will do us good, Hector, and our landlady is so full of complaints about the smells of your bottles I hate to meet her."

"I don't see why we should not move now," said her brother. "I think it will be difficult to suit our requirements in comfortable rooms, unless we drift towards Islington, where there are so many houses of the shabby-genteel order. It won't be much further along the Gray's Inn Road, and I think we could find something suitable there. I want a fairly large room for study."

"Hector, I thought you had given that up in great part, and would go out into the air more than formerly."

"Not yet," he replied.

"Oh, Hector," said Miss Senn, coming close to him and placing her hand on his shoulder, "do give it up—do, for my sake!"

"It is for your sake that I keep on, Edith. You know what I think of you, dear—that I live only for you, poor child."

"It is not for me, Hector; you know how I hate and dread it. It is an awful thing. Sometimes I would like to break the lot you have here."

"Don't do that, Edith."

"Then promise me you will desist. I am utterly worn out with anxiety and fear."

"Never fear for me, Edith, I am perfectly safe."

"But I do, Hector, and I hate it more and more. It is monstrous."

"I can't see it."

"You have no remorse and no feeling."

"I don't regret any action, Edith. I glory in it. Remorse is such a funny word to use."

"Hector, look at the harm to others."

"The others can take care of themselves, Edith dear."

"Hector, do say that is the last!"

"Edith, my poor child, don't continue to talk. Dress and come out, and we will look after some fresh apartments."

Edith, tearful and nervous, did as her brother wished her to do, and the two spent hours hunting for apartments. Day after day they walked about enquiring, searching out and rejecting all, one for one reason, another for another.

Eventually they obtained suitable apartments in the poor, populous and cheap neighbourhood of St. Luke's. Here were moved the chemical effects and a large number of tools for work in metal.

"I wished Salamboos moved furniture," said Senn, "I'd give them a job myself. Patronise my own boss. How's that, Edith, for good?"

"Hector, don't talk such stuff," replied Edith.

Senn was becoming a very smart chemist. He delved into the chemistry of the most dangerous of all explosives—the manufacture of fulminates, a class of loose chemical compounds that any man who fully realised their nature would most carefully leave alone: compounds of such explosive character that a feather touch in a dry and warm

condition would lead to their decomposition with explosive violence. He must have possessed a charmed life to have passed through it all unscathed. He knew enough, and far too much, for that matter, to be really dangerous, but not nearly enough to be secure from danger. The world has many men of such rash and reckless temperaments. Every day we read of them. Every day they fall into the pits they dig for others. This one man, however, seemed to walk on the brink of disaster and death without the least hurt to himself.

"Look here, Edith, in these twelve Christmas bon-bons there is hardly enough fulminate for us to see, and yet they make a deuce of a row."

"It can't cost them much for noise," said Edith ;
"must be all profit."

"That egg-cup full I have on top of the landlady's picture of Jerusalem the Golden would give them enough noise if the picture cord gave way," said Senn.

Brother and sister had a hearty laugh.

Believing in himself, Senn actually became master of the crude ground-work of dangerous chemistry that made the fortune of Nobel, who discovered how to handle that pale yellow heavy fluid known as nitro-glycerine without blowing himself and half the town into smithereens—a substance that becomes more dangerous the less pure it is, an unstable compound of ten times the power of the best gun-powder.

Besides all this Senn took a liking to regulate clocks — cheap American clocks at first, dearer ones subsequently.

“These very cheap lines,” said he, “do not keep sufficiently correct time for a man who has to be at work by eight in the morning, or else lose a quarter day’s pay. That one I bought from an all-sort shop where they were selling off the salvage from a fire at a ruinous sacrifice isn’t much better. I can’t stand bad clocks or defective timekeepers—especially the alarm variety. If you wish to wake up at six, the alarm forgets its work and you sleep on to nine as sure as eggs are eggs. There isn’t much certainty in them. Here are two which cost 2s. 11d. each, and though both are set to wake me from my happy dreams at five minutes to six, one strikes at half-past five and the other sounds at seven. I either have to get up too soon or an hour late.”

“It doesn’t matter about the time you wake up, Hector,” said Miss Senn, “I always wake to the moment without such things.”

“Yes,” replied her brother, “but that is not what I mean. Clocks ought to be clocks when they cost 2s. 11d. each. I only bought the second one because the first wasn’t to be relied on. The second one seems worse. I think I shall have to change them after all.”

“I wish, Hector, you wouldn’t waste so much money. You know how poor we are, and your

books and tools cost more than we can afford. I haven't had a new dress for six months, and this shabby old thing makes me look a fright. And my hat is dropping to pieces, and my boots are quite worn out. It makes me look hideous, and I feel ashamed of it."

"It doesn't do anything of the kind, Edith dear; you always look beautiful. I know it is a shame to see you without the best of dresses, and I am sorry I can't buy you everything you ought to have. Forgive me, sister mine; some day you shall be rich."

"We must do without clocks then, Hector."

"One clock more or less won't hurt," said Senn; "I'll change all these at 2s. 11d., and buy a larger one that will wake us both to the tick. Then you won't have to think of the time, Edith."

"I don't mind thinking, Hector; I wish you would let clocks alone."

"I will when I manage to get one to keep correct time. There are lots in the market, but you want to know the make to secure the right article."

Hector Senn changed the clocks and bought others of more expensive character, and though Edith declared them to be accurate time-keepers, he was not satisfied.

"Although this one keeps beautiful time, it strikes too loud a sound," said he. "It makes me jump in my sleep. I can alter the defect by fitting on a

double brass plate. It will be more musical. We can call it the Drum and Cymbals chronometer. On Sundays and bank holidays we can put a piece of thick paper between the plates—sandwich-like—and the alarm will rattle on to that. The change of note will tell us without thinking that it is Sunday. In other words, listen to the music and stay in bed.”

“What an awful lot of work for nothing, Hector. That’s all I have to say.”

Clocks and wheels and their adjustment and improvement and correct time-keeping consequently were the order of the day: clocks smothered in boxes of felt so as not to wake the baby; clocks packed into old stay boxes with huge bottles of heavy yellow oil almost lying on the works, so they might undergo automatic greasing possibly; clocks that worked so silently it was painful to the nerves to be near them and see their ghostlike action; a clock that at the appointed second shot forth a little black and red three-horned demon, who waved a flaming sword and disappeared in a puff of smoke.

“That is an ugly little wretch, Hector,” said Miss Senn; “where did you get him? I do detest him so.”

“Don’t speak disrespectfully of my undersized little devil. He is capable of doing a lot of mischief. I bought four of them. Got them at a great reduction by taking a quantity. Placed in a suitable position his sword would strike a spark that would

lead to an explosion and blow down half a street in a second. All devils are dangerous."

CHAPTER VII.

"AGAIN!" said Mr. Hennikon. "The fourth time in five years. I despair. Why was I ever born to undergo such torture! It is useless contending further. I shall rebuild in the cheapest way this time and without precautions. If it goes it goes, and I shall go too."

"Two gentlemen have called to see you," announced the man servant.

"Very well, Stevens. Show them up here."

Inspector Slowon and Sergeant Dinnock marched into the room. The old discussion was resumed, the old theories advanced and the old conclusions come to. They were *nothing*.

"They have made it murder now," said Inspector Slowon.

"I know it," said Mr. Hennikon. "One man caught in the conflagration and never seen again."

"Very strange, to my mind," said Sergeant Dinnock. "He wasn't seen to come out and he hasn't been seen since. That doesn't say he stopped in."

"Stuff!" said Mr. Hennikon.

"Not always stuff, sir. I never takes anything for

granted. Prove your case, says I, and I believe you. If you don't prove, I don't believe. More often than not I don't believe when you do prove. I should like to follow him up."

"You'll have to go somewhere else, then," grinned Mr. Hennikon.

"I suppose you'll increase the reward, sir," said Inspector Slowon.

"Yes, increase it to anything you like, it makes no difference. No one will claim it. £5,000 if you like."

"That ought to tempt one of them if anything will," rejoined Inspector Slowon.

Sergeant Dinnoek rubbed his hands in possible anticipation of owning such a nice round sum.

"Nothing will tempt them," said Mr. Hennikon ; "not if you give them the place itself, do I believe they will stop."

"It's a large sum, Mr. Hennikon," said Sergeant Dinnoek ; "it's a fortune. If remorse at their handiwork don't fetch 'em, the money ought to."

"Remorse," interposed Inspector Slowon with a certain amount of scorn, "is unknown in criminals, sergeant, as I have often tried to explain to you, but you always will have it that some of them do feel remorse."

"I think some of them do."

"Not a bit of it ! They're only acting—getting round the blind side of the chaplain so as to get

something to read in jail instead of being left to ferment in their own viciousness. I don't say it's wrong for a prisoner to wish to have something else to think of to keep his mind healthy, instead of being made to brood over evil, which is about all most of them know. I say we do our best to keep them degraded criminals by inactivity of body and inactivity of mind. The only hope to lessen or eradicate criminal tendencies is to find healthy employment of mind and body for these people. Instinctive criminals—such as we have every reason to believe are at work in this mysterious case—according to all the scientific authorities never have the least remorse, and I agree with those gentlemen. The papers used to call them hardened criminals. Except the aggravation we give them by our jail systems there isn't any hardening; they are hard from the first."

"This is nothing to do with the case, gentlemen," interposed Mr. Hennikon.

"Well, sir," replied the inspector, "it has this bearing, that the gang which operates here are old hands, and never feel any compunction at the result of their work. It's only waste of time to think they regret their crimes."

"If we can't think of something new," said Sergeant Dinnock, "we have nothing whatever to go on."

"You have nothing now to go on," said Mr. Hennikon. "Do just as you like. I am too crushed

to care whether they are found or not ; it's all one to me."

"Well, sir," said the inspector, "we'll do our best ; and if there is nothing further to tell us, we are only wasting your time stopping here."

"I have nothing more to tell you," replied Mr. Hennikon, "and there's the end of it."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE parish of St. Luke's is one of the poorest in London, and adjoins the unaristocratic neighbourhood of Bunhill Fields, a site made historical by the memory of Daniel Defoe, who is buried there. Both places are just beyond the old city gates. Outside the series of ancient gates which were erected when London was a walled city, and had to fortify itself against aggression by masonry, arches and iron-bound gates—fortifications well suited to the times of their construction, and capable of resisting the assaults of footmen and horsemen, of javelin throwers and halberdiers, but which would be utterly useless against the smallest shots of modern artillery—the parish of St. Luke's lost its pastoral aspect, its verdant fields and rural ditches, and side by side with its neighbour, Bunhill Fields, rose to be the habitation of men. When suburbs were in close proximity to

a town and not miles away from it, St. Luke's was a suburb within a mile of the heart of London town. St. Luke's rose to fame and prosperity, and flourished until overswept by that tidal wave of extending men called the race of citizens. Even the most vigorous and undisturbed patches of grass that still managed to linger here and there, hopelessly suffered extinction as St. Luke's, falling lower and lower in its career, became the haunt and home of the poorest people of a dismal city. Nothing shows the present character of this parish better than a description of two buildings which still flourish within sound of its parish church bells. One is an old building, dating back a long way ; the other is comparatively modern. One is known as the Madhouse and the other the Hall of Science.

The Madhouse is an immense brick structure. Built in fertile fields when land was cheap, its grounds were enclosed by a high prison-like wall which acted in the dual capacity as protection from without and safe keeping for those within. The site was specially chosen as far from the haunts of men. Looking over the high wall, little half circle windows can be seen, guarded by iron bars and placed high up under the eaves of the roof, so none of the inmates might ever see beyond the grounds—either the people, or the houses, or life. It depicts the idea that no lunatic could ever recover his senses and it shows the ignorance of public opinion of the time,

that fostered the view that lunatics, being incurable, required a similar kind of confinement to felons. Were one asked to guess by outside inspection what the building standing at the corner of the City Road and Old Street was, he would say it was a prison for the worst of malefactors. Its inmates were religiously isolated from the living world, and often from each other, and forbidden to communicate with that general life which helps to maintain the balance of every sane mind. Placed in silent cells with barred windows and no outlook except to the sky, they saw nothing more of the world from which they had been excluded. Is it any wonder, then, that those whose minds had become unhinged on one subject only, should gradually become mad on all, when hope was crushed out of their hearts? Is it any wonder that they made desperate attempts to escape from their prisons? Is it any wonder they would break from restraint and the horrors of the tyranny of those vile custodians who were kept as warders over them? Rather is it a wonder their known attempts to regain freedom were so few. This old Madhouse, officially designated St. Luke's Asylum for the Insane, still exists. It is always tenanted. Always full. The brickwork of the carcase is but slightly altered. The revolution which has shaken its fabric to the foundation has taken place within, where, in deference to modern thought, modern science and modern kindness, a chance is held out to the deranged of

again returning sane to civil life. Still it stands, a dingy old pile towering like a mighty giant amidst the pigmy puny tenements that have crept up around it.

Such, then, is one of the two buildings picked out to illustrate the district.

The other building is in total contrast to it. It is the Hall of Science. It is on the other side of Old Street. A small square hall with a gallery running along each side and supporting four rows of seats, it holds perhaps two hundred people. A platform is raised at the end for the entertainers. The doors open widely, almost on to the pavement. As the Madhouse seems to embody all that is slavery and confinement, so this open little hall, with easy ingress and egress, seems to embody freedom, liberty and light. It is as well known to the inhabitants around as the Madhouse itself. Fortunately it is so, for men of all walks and professions and status in society secretly wend their way there, to satisfy their inquisitiveness by a visit or two to such a famous place. They do not often publicly say they have been. It is inadvisable.

Ask any urchin which is Old Street Madhouse and he points it out in a moment.

Ask him also which is the Hall of Science, and he turns directly round and points to the hall on the other side of the way.

This little hall, situate in the dirty, poverty-stricken

parish of St. Luke's, has resounded with the eloquence of men of ability. It has been made famous by the names of Bradlaugh, Besant, and others less known to popular fame. Here Bradlaugh and others, by sheer weight of intellect, drew audiences of big-headed, big-faced, big-featured men and a few women, every Sunday evening, to hear orations on divers subjects.

Scanning the faces of the audience, if physiognomy be reliable even in a minor degree, it is patent these are not small-minded or imbecile people who listen so patiently to the discourse. These seem people who would detect false logic, these seem people able to judge for themselves, these seem people to whom argument and deduction and reason would commend itself and who would instantly detect and reject sophistries or vulgar braggadocio.

These are not like the inmates of the huge building opposite, which frowns its gloom almost within sound of their voices. These are not the tenants suited for the Old Street Madhouse, but people who will calculate and weigh, and accept or reject, with mathematical precision. These people pay one shilling, two shillings, and three shillings for a seat, to hear a simple address, and these people in the mass know the value of the money they pay. With some few exceptions of wealthy people and learned men who attend to see for themselves, they do not look as if they belonged to the affluent classes. Neither are they thriftless and debauched.

The two buildings in Old Street seem an unconscious mirror of the world. One an ancient, restraining prison-like, huge building, barely large enough for its lunatic inhabitants. The other a tiny, modern, open hall, amply large enough for the sensible men.

Now in this noted parish, with its mixture of logic on one side of the road and raving madness on the other, lived a Bart.'s man, a Dr. Merryweather.

A blunt, honest, kind-hearted Englishman, who knew exactly what he was about when he settled in this neighbourhood. He practised in a small, clean, painted house, where economy of space was essential to existence. Nothing much bigger to be had than this small house in the district, unless one went to that big house at the corner of the City Road.

Dr. Merryweather had done very well here. In some of these unpretentious, unostentatious surgeries men have accumulated a fair amount of wealth. The extent of their practices has been enormous. The facilities to work the practices are at hand. No show, no waste of money on useless ornamentation, but everything arranged for a maximum of work with a minimum of bodily and mental fatigue.

Being an old Bart.'s man and not living so very far from this Hospital, Bart.'s men naturally drifted down there for a chat, or sometimes to help in odd cases, or see special freaks in disease.

Thus it came about, when the popular and generous Dr. Merryweather had an attack of gout, induced by

excessive exhaustion, he found the time pass fairly quickly, as his streams of visitors had almost all been, or were, students from his Alma Mater.

It was on one of these occasions that Joe Gunter, young Fabin, Ellersdale, and some one else were there, discussing every phase of life and every known science with their host, that Dr. Merryweather related a striking chapter of this tale.

"I don't know, gentlemen," he asked, "whether you would be interested in it, but you ought to be if you are not; but I have a curious case to tell you about."

"Go on, Merryweather," said young Fabin, "if the gout doesn't pull you off the line and Joe Gunter here will stop his beastly cough, we shall have a chance of hearing the gouty yarn."

"We may as well hear what it is," said Gunter.

"Well, then, not so long ago, I was called out in the middle of the night to a fellow who was awfully bad. He lived in a little den of a place with his sister, who, I must say, was as devoted a nurse as I have ever seen."

"Evidently mashed *you*, Merryweather," interjected young Fabin.

"He had been ill," continued the doctor, ignoring the interruption, "for several days.

"Bilious attack, said his sister. Vomiting irrespective of food, headache, irritable, and there may have been a slight rise of temperature. Not like himself."

"That girl had given *him* too—too much sweet stuff, like she gave you, Merryweather," said young Fabin.

"When I saw him he still had bad headache and couldn't stand the noise; otherwise he was rather too quiet. His pulse was somewhat irregular and tongue furred. He didn't care about any food."

"I should think not," interposed young Fabin; "too much jam about that girl."

Dr. Merryweather took no notice of the interruptions, at which the others smiled. He continued:—

"I did not like the look of his face, somehow. It struck me as being too pale. His sister is pale, and she said he always was pale, but it was more noticeable now."

"She wanted you to make her blush to give her some colour, Merryweather," said young Fabin.

"He was, as far as I could learn, a most industrious, hard-working fellow, and had a scientific bent of mind. He had a lot of tools and chemicals and clock-work machines. They seemed very poor, although they had these articles. By Jove, that sister of his stuck to him like a leech."

"No wonder he looked pale, Merryweather, when a leech was sucking his blood out," said young Fabin.

"In three or four days he improved, lost his sleeplessness, brightened up, and was cheerful again; and, except the headache and irregular pulse, there didn't look to be much the matter with him."

"You had drawn the leech off and given the man a chance," said young Fabin.

"Well, there wasn't so much deviation from what I should say was his regular condition in health."

"Then; I suppose you knocked off attending, in spite of that girl?" asked young Fabin.

"Ah," replied Dr. Merryweather, whilst he roared with laughter, "I knew I should catch you there, Fabin, my boy. I played up to it. I let you into the mess beautifully. All I was afraid of was that Ellersdale might have spoilt it all by a few stray words."

Every one present enjoyed the joke, even young Fabin himself.

"I didn't retire," continued Dr. Merryweather, when the laugh was over, "but visited every day."

"The girl was too much for you, after all, Merryweather," said young Fabin. "I thought so."

"Although they might have thought, like Fabin did, that it was quite unnecessary."

"Half the house didn't, I'll bet," said young Fabin.

"Being a sensible pair, however—you'll excuse the remark, Fabin, I'm sure—I admit it's rough on *you*—they said nothing, just followed out my directions, and the poor fellow laid in bed."

"Ho," grunted young Fabin.

"You've got him now," said Ellersdale, "he hasn't diagnosed it yet. The petticoat has spoilt him. Don't let it out. Look at his face. Fine doctor he'll make to attend the Prince of Wales."

"Don't tell him," added Joe Gunter, between his coughs. "This will do him a lot of good. We'll smarten him up if he only comes to St. Luke's parish often enough, so that when he goes up for his final he'll paralyse the examiners. They dare not inquire where he was educated, and he will be too proud to say in Golden Lane, or Gray's Inn Road, or Old Street, but say something he will, I feel sure. He'll be so pleased with himself, he'll give the authorities for his knowledge as a man with gout, a man with a cough, and a man——"

"Without a diploma," chipped in young Fabin, and turned the tables on Joe Gunter, who was not qualified then.

"Well, I must get on with the tale," said Dr. Merryweather, resuming the thread of the story. "It was not long before his sister said her brother was subject to nightmare, slight groans, opened his eyes very widely, flushed up and shouted out, then went off to sleep again."

Dr. Merryweather and Ellersdale looked hard at each other, said nothing and waited.

"What then?" asked young Fabin.

"Well, after that," resumed Dr. Merryweather, "I thought I would have to prepare his sister for what was coming, and I did. She was awfully cut up. She quite upset me. I'll confess her devotion and gentleness to the patient made a deep impression on me. He was everything to her, and she to him."

"You don't mean to say you let him die?" asked young Fabin, with a savage expression.

"I didn't let him die," replied Dr. Merryweather; "but in five days he was dead."

"Why, I can't see it. You fellows have all the joke to yourselves. Why don't you out with it, like decent men?"

"Well, I've told my part. Ellersdale will tell you the rest. He helped me do the *post-mortem*."

"Look here, Fabin," said Ellersdale, "the membranes covering his brain were firmly adherent in several places from old inflammation that he had years before, very likely in childhood. And we found an increase of fluid and some inflammatory effusion from the recent and final attack. Merryweather has given you a pretty fair clinical history of a case of meningitis, which I think will impress itself on your own brain."

"I never thought of it," said young Fabin.

"So it seems," said Dr. Merryweather; "and I'll tell you something more about these cases of old meningitis which doesn't apply directly to medicine. It's this. A fair percentage of men who have been criminals of a bad type have shown after death that they, too, had some brain irregularity, such as these adhesions of the membranes covering the brain."

"So, then, you think the physical condition of the brain has something to do with mental bias and eccentricity?" asked young Fabin.

"Rather. That is the generally accepted doctrine. Where there is some defect in the structure or nutrition of the brain it is only logical to infer that its functions must be more or less impaired. Not necessarily that the deviation from the normal would be in the direction of crimes against society, but it might be in that direction as well as in any other direction."

"Look here, Fabin," said Ellersdale.

"I'm looking, and also keeping one eye on Merryweather's gouty toe," replied Fabin.

"*Idiots* ——" continued Ellersdale. "Don't get up, man, or take it as reflecting on the members of your own family."

"I'm not getting up for that purpose. I wished to look more closely at one."

"Well, idiots' brains," went on Ellersdale, "are much below the average weight of those of their own sex. If a brain be impaired in a great part of its bulk it must necessarily reduce its power of activity and balance."

"Dose Fabin with as much criminology as you can," interpolated Joe Gunter, as he helped himself to more refreshment and nearly hit the doctor's gouty toe in doing so.

"Heavens, man, take care!" called out Dr. Merryweather. "You nearly touched my toe."

"You'll make him an accidental criminal if you touch it," said Ellersdale; "for he will throw a

tumbler or a table at you on the spur of the moment."

"You have not any adhesions of the membranes of your own brain, have you" said young Fabin, "to cause you to throw anything when your gouty toe is touched?"

"Not exactly," replied the Doctor with a quiet smile. "That is just where the difference is manifest. Without some brain or physical alteration it is probable the person would be an accidental criminal, but with brain alteration he would belong to the class called *Instinctive Criminals*."

"Which did your patient belong to?"

"Good gracious, man!" replied Dr. Merryweather. "I don't believe he belonged to either."

"It doesn't work out properly without," said young Fabin. "As you rubbed the symptoms of meningitis into me, so I intend to rub the rottenness of your deduction into you. See that. Here was your model young man with his model sister of impressionable deportment, without a criminal tendency. According to your own account, which I venture to assert was biased by that lovely sister of his making up to you, he was a model of social and private propriety. Where does your theory in criminology come in?"

"Merryweather," said Ellersdale, "does not know any more of him——"

"Than I did of meningitis," interjected young

Fabin, to the amusement of all. "We are gradually getting even, Merryweather, bar the gout."

"I was going to say," said Ellersdale, "that Merryweather does not know any more of him than that he came from Seven Dials to St. Luke's. He brought his chemicals and tools with him. He was taken ill here and died, and we opened his head."

"You, no doubt, are all strong on meningitis," said young Fabin; "but you are very weak on criminology. You see, I have bowled you all out in one over."

"We can't go as far as that," said Joe Gunter, "and apply the rule to every case without exception."

"What became of his sister?"

"Miss Senn, you mean?"

"Yes, if that were her name."

"I don't know," replied Dr. Merryweather; "she disposed of the chemicals and moved away and there is the end of it. The adhesions from meningitis in infancy ought to have led to something."

"Only they didn't," returned young Fabin.

"No, they didn't. Mind you, I don't say this man was anything but the most upright and honourable of men," continued Dr. Merryweather; "although theoretically he ought to have been a great criminal."

"Especially with that sister," added young Fabin.

"I think he must have possessed the greatest

integrity. In fact, the affection of brother and sister and the studious habits of the brother in particular, make me think he was the last man in the world who would have been guilty of any violation of the law. *Yet, with all this*, I should not have been surprised to hear he had done a lot of evil."

A FACE IN A BOTTLE.

CHAPTER I.

NO. 7043 in the Museum Catalogue is a face in a bottle. It is surrounded by other specimens of parts of the human body, removed to, and stored in, this charnel house of horrors for education of medical students. Not far off resides a large family of hideous skeletons, made brothers and sisters in this place, owing to the strangeness of their bone diseases. Some spines in such contortions that their owners had to walk about with their heads under their own arms during their term of life; others with faces held at such an angle that they never could turn from the ground whilst their owners stood on their feet. In another section of the museum a stranger would think a shower of kidneys had fallen in the building. There are kidneys of all characters. That horse-shoe-shaped kidney is the form found in people who are born with one kidney short in their complement; other kidneys to illustrate all forms of disease; kidneys large, flabby, and irregular, and kidneys small, shrivelled, and dried. Some are the repository of enough stone to raise a

monument to the memory of the deceased. A natural tombstone already erected in the body of a man ere he died. Strange, too, that amongst these pathological specimens there should be a plain, healthy kidney. One would imagine its place was in the anatomical department, and not here amongst diseased fellows. But that assumption would be a grievous error. This kidney is called "the kidney" by our students; it has no other name, and it has no number in the catalogue. Tradition has it that when the operation of removal of the kidney was effected without necessarily leading to the death of the patient, a woman was admitted to the wards suffering from calculus of the kidney. So grave were the symptoms that removal of the stone-encumbered organ had to be resorted to. There was no alternative—either that or nothing. Three days after the operation the woman died. The autopsy showed some other surgeons had previously removed the other kidney. It was unfortunate. Her husband, freed from the encumbrance of a useless sort of wife, presented the hospital authorities with a sound healthy kidney as a mark of his appreciation of their services and gratitude for their attention. His munificent and thoughtful gift is "the kidney" of our museum. It is not without its uses in the education of students. Not so very far removed from the pathological specimens of kidneys are to be seen livers ranged

in rows in derision at millions spent annually by vendors of quack medicines who advertise their guaranteed cures of all ailments of the liver—a delightful mockery of the credulity of the public—livers so distorted and ugly that they must have been a source of perpetual nightmare to their hosts. Besides all these there are thousands of other specimens heaped up in cases, on shelves, in brass stands, along galleries, in nooks and corners, and crowded together in recesses. The museum swarms and teems with them—all carefully selected, prepared, preserved, bottled on the premises, labelled and catalogued. Woe betide a student who carelessly handles these precious relics of decayed humanity before the college examiners, or who slightly shakes a dependent specimen as it swings in a bottle when it is a question whether he pass or be rejected. The unwritten law of all exams. is that he who so carelessly handles the dead is not fit to be allowed to touch the living. This cursory description applies to all good museums in every medical school, with the exception, perhaps, that other museums may be deficient and unfortunate in not owning “the kidney,” which would detract from the education of their students.

Amongst the heterogeneous collection is No. 7043, not occupying much space, but just as interesting as his neighbours. It is a plain face in a flat glass jar of methylated spirit. At first sight it does not seem

very remarkable—flat, plebeian, like a face you can see in any boxing ring—an every-day face. There is no head or brains at the back of the face; it is only a full face. The eyes are absent and the eyelids closed. Dead eyes won't keep well; they are too watery, inclined to shed too many tears at their own fate. So the eyes have been removed from the orbits; the nose is somewhat peculiar and flattened—a slight scar runs round it. Were it not for the tale that hangs to the nose, it never would have found a resting place in our museum. Space is valuable; unless it is extraordinary it is not wanted. The face, with its closed mouth and surly scowl, has frowned back on the gaze of thousands and thousands of medical students in its time. They have quizzed it, peered and leered at it, passed summary judgment on it, and gone so far as to call its owner a darned idiot. When abused, this face seems to frown back more than usual. It may be only a fancy of mine, yet it looks so different that I can hardly believe I am mistaken. Sometimes I could swear a savage scowl does take the place of the habitual sullen resentment. Whether in the dim silent watches of the night a smile ever replaces the scowl, is unknown. Whether the spirit of its owner stands guard behind the jar watching the play of his own features and overhearing ribald jests, no one will ever know in this world. His sprite may be doomed for his sins to eternally haunt his own cut-off face—perhaps

ordered to mount guard, a silent speech-lost sentinel, over the thousands and thousands of other emblems of the certainty of the mortality of man, which crowd upon the surrounding shelves. A sprite chained near to the evidence of his crimes, eternally reminded of it and perpetually seeing it in all its deformity — perhaps dashing his phantom form against all intruders who stop to gaze at the face in the bottle, or else stealthily stepping up behind each visitor and lashing out with his left a knock-out blow at those who desecrate the sanctity of his glass sepulchre. If the ghost of the face in the bottle be hovering round, any vanity or conceit he possessed must have been sorely tried in this charnel-house, the home of our students and the grave of our dead. But the history of the face in the bottle runs in this curious way :—

Thompson, just graduated, was appointed one of the eight house surgeons for the ensuing six months. He sat in the casualty room, swinging his leg over the side of a heavy chair, smoking a dirty briarwood pipe and cogitating on things in general. It was nearly midnight. The time hung heavily on his hands, and he dreamed of a glorious future which never, never would be his lot. How many bright, honourable, clever young doctors have dreamed the same dream, to awake to the reality that brains are nought without golden opportunity. He wondered, too, how Banners ever scraped through in diseases of

the middle ear. He wished his week of night duty were over. In the midst of contemplation, the swing doors swung back, and two sturdy policemen ran a stretcher on to the table in no time.

Thompson was up like a flash of lightning, and plugged his fingers deeply into an ugly gash in the side of a man's neck.

"That'll stop the worst source of hæmorrhage," he remarked. "Now Bobby, pull that bell, sharp, or he'll be dead before we can show you some fine surgery of the throat. That's right, I can hear Thistlethwaite coming down at a canter along the corridor."

The patient's chest gave one or two heaves, and the cut end of his windpipe bobbed up and down in the open wound like a float on the waves. He was speechless. The vocal cords were severed from the wind which made them sound.

"Looks bad," ejaculated Thistlethwaite; "we shall have to tie everything we can pick up, and suture the trachea afterwards. It isn't much use, though; he's done for."

They picked up the vessels, held on with artery forceps and ligatured them with Chinese silk, whilst the windpipe gave an occasional spasmodic gasp to show that all was not over yet. By the time ligation was complete, the windpipe ceased to express appreciation of their labours by bobbing in and out, and its owner had forfeited his title to active human status. He was only a corpse. That's all.

"We may as well bandage it round and see how it looks," said Thompson, "before we call up the casualty nurse to clean up." And they did.

"Good gracious," exclaimed Thistlethwaite; "look here, Thompson, it is the man Plastic made a new nose for in the summer session. I remember him well. Here's a go, cut his throat now. I never noticed the features before."

"I remember the case," replied Thompson; "but I lost sight of him. He was discharged when I was away on the moors grouse-shooting. Was there not something occurred when he went out. Some little passage of humour."

"Yes, I thought you heard of it. I will tell you presently. First of all let us get rid of the Bobbies."

"Constables," said Thistlethwaite, addressing the policemen; "you can enter your names and numbers in that book, and we will look after the rest. He's dead. Nothing valuable found on him, I suppose?"

"Nothing, sir," said the senior officer, "except this here bit of paper. I read it, but couldn't make head or tail of it."

Dr. Thompson took hold of the scrap of paper and read:—

"2 primrose it's myself as said i would do it and i done it by the powers yer may scape me now protected by wards and the like and doctors and three hexits from gardens, but when it's in blazes I gets yer mavoureen i chivies yer into a corner for iver and

iver—see if i don't avic—it's plenty of time as 'll be on my hands thin. Liking or no liking it's when i finds yer I kapes yer. P.O.B. the rist of the world is forgiven."

"All right, constable, you had better take charge of this strange epistle for the coroner. Good-night, constables."

"Those blokes hain't been in practice long," whispered the junior to his superior officer, as they tramped heavily though the doors; "less they'd know'd better than to ask traps if we'd found any valuables on him. My eye! What does the regulations say? 'No man ain't compelled to give evidence against hisself. Simply salute your superior officer and reply, yes, sir, or no, sir, as the occasion demands.' That's what Rule 49, Scotland Yard regulations, how to make a man into a constable, says. Those blokes don't know police regulations, less they wouldn't ask silly questions. My eye! Give me the 'sperienced practitioner who knows what's what."

"Now," resumed Thistlethwaite; "as we are alone again I will relate the scene between Plastic and O'Brien, the day Pat was discharged. Plastic is a deuced smart surgeon. That nose O'Brien's wearing turned out splendidly. The skin was twisted down from the forehead, and with one or two grafts borrowed to bridge up with, it has come out well. I think the nurse who was in his ward gave Plastic

three or four little slices from her arm for the purpose. She was a good-natured girl, and O'Brien wormed round her with his blarney and she let them have a few snips of skin to graft on his new nose. Plastic was so proud of his handiwork that he seemed quite dull when Pat was leaving the hospital. Plastic said to O'Brien :

" 'You'd better leave us your face when you've done with it, O'Brien, we should like to keep it as a specimen of high art in surgery.'

" O'Brien blurted out :

" 'When I've done with the face of me, begob, you're welcome, docthor dear, to the hole of it, nose and all, and I've no objection if yer stuff it where yer likes at all, at all, I'll not be after dissenting. 'Tis not for want of a nose that feature would be spoiled in our alley. The spalpeens hasn't a sound one amongst them after I come home from a spray. A nose, indade. To think of it. When I'm in Paradise, it's not a false nose, but a foine pair of wings I'll be looking after, I'm thinking. You're welcome, docthor dear, to me face, when the last breath has gone through the beautiful nose you've been after making for me, to be sure. Sure, it's a lot of bating it'll take now without squeezing down on my cheeks.'

" 'All right, O'Brien,' laughed Plastic ; 'that is a bargain, and these gentlemen are witnesses to it.'

" 'A bargain is it? Sure, and it's a bargain. My respects to your honour !'

"And off Pat O'Brien walked.

"According to that the face was Plastic's before O'Brien gave up the ghost. O'Brien's last breath never went through his nostrils, but puffed out of the cut end of the wind pipe. I don't suppose Plastic will complain. Never mind though, let us rouse up that little nurse and clear up this beastly mess he has inflicted on us."

They roused up the nurse. She cleaned up the mess.

CHAPTER II.

NURSE PRIMROSE was not a toffy nurse. On the contrary, she entered the profession ere it was fashionable for the higher classes of society to dedicate their quota of daughters to be servants to illiterate pauper invalids in hospitals; to empty the slops and make the nasty beds of rougher humanity. Nurse Primrose was there to earn an honest, though somewhat humble living, and not with a view to pick up a husband or mash a man. That was as far from her thoughts as it would have been derogatory in the days of which I write for a doctor to have married a nurse. When she performed her work she did it with the sole idea of discharging a duty in an efficient way and earning a living. The last thought

that could possibly have entered her trim little head was that anyone would admire her style or be fascinated with the taste she exhibited in placing a salivarian at proper range for a patient. Hospitals commanded plenty of these devoted women, faithfully serving their office, unnoticed and unknown, and maintaining an honourable though humble position therein.

"This *is* a nasty case," soliloquised Nurse Primrose, as the porters dumped a fresh case into bed No. 18. "How very repulsive. His nose is cut off, I declare. I suppose I shall have him in one of my beds till he goes out. It's very disagreeable."

Her soliloquy was broken by the quick step of Dr. Plastic as it resounded along the passage to the accompaniment of skurrying feet of students. He entered the ward and deposited his hat on the clean deal table as he passed by it.

"What's this? Nose off? Very unsightly. Drunken brawl as usual. Don't *you* think so, Jones? Heigh? Some other toper in the gin palace did it with a broken jug or half a beer bottle. If they must get drunk, let them get drunk and be quiet, not drunk and be rowdy. A clean cut and quite even, too. A nose makes a lot of difference in one's appearance. When the nose is off every other part seems to thrust itself out for individual notice. Wonder what his wife will think of him with a flat face like that at dinner. He would be quite lost in the States.

Disfranchised owing to loss of national tone. Departed teeth are remedied by artificial substitutes. Enucleated eyes are a terrible calamity, but artificial eyes, although slightly irritating, don't cost so very much, as they last about nine months each. But the crux of disfigurement, I think, is attained when one loses a nose. Nurse Primrose, you wouldn't like to lose your well-chiselled nose now, would you?"

"No, Sir; I would sooner die than be so disfigured."

"Ah, nurse, I daresay had he owned a nice little nose the other ruffian would have spared it. Jones, I see by your smile you agree with me. It looks bad, the bones separating the air passages and chambers. Some attempt will have to be made to cover it up. Send him down to the operating theatre, Mr. Thistlethwaite, in, say, half-an-hour, and let Dr. Barlow have a look at him too."

"Yes, sir," answered the house surgeon."

"What's next—new?"

"Only a broken leg and the man you wanted in with a new growth of the jaw."

In this style the cavalcade wandered on through the surgical ward, looking at one case, re-arranging the dressings of another, removing drainage tubes in a third, and so on, until the round was completed, when they descended the stairs, crossed the paved yard, and entered the operating theatre, where Dr. Barlow was already in waiting. Dr. Barlow assisted

his colleague so well that at the end of a week O'Brien might have been seen comfortably reposing in bed No. 18, and with every prospect of some sort of relief to disfigurement. Nurse Primrose waited on him, and as she passed the foot of his bed in the course of duty, O'Brien accosted her thus :

"Nurse, didn't the Dochter say as my nose would be an illigant ornament onst again to my face?"

"Yes, Patsy O'Brien, he did."

"And do you think so yoursilf, now, my darling?"

"Of course it will if Dr. Plastic said so, but you mustn't call me your darling, I won't allow it."

"Och, jewel, but you knows you are thin, to be sure. Isn't it now the likes of yourself and the dochter thats enables me to detect the schmell of roast pork onst again? It's a jewel you are entoirely wid yer foine ways."

"Don't talk nonsense, Patsy."

"It's no nonsense, thin, that I'm after spaking, but the gospel truth. It's trying I am to grow my new nose after the shape of your own illigant fature. If you'll only be so koind as to step up close and let me put the tip of my finger on it, maybe it's my own that 'ud be the foinest nose in the whole meat market."

"It would heal much better, Patsy, if you left it alone. I never pass your bed but I see your hand move up to your nose."

"To be sure you do, it's just for that self-same purpose, it's my hand that I put on it, my jewel.

I'm just after copying the pattern of your own model from loife each time I set eyes on its illigant outline. When you stand sideways it's the genuine *retroussée* turn as I make at the end of it, wid a gentle pressure upwards of the tip of my thumb. By the powers, mavourneen, when yer comes straight for my cupboard chair it's the sides as I square with a mighty foine pinch for fear it's over my face it 'ud be sprawling. Do yer mind me now?"

"It's like your impudence, Patsy O'Brien, to speak of me. How dare you do it?"

"It's my heart that you've took thin, my jewel, and I'm after making my new nose grow as like to your own as two peas in a pod. Sure it's your own flesh and blood now as yer gave to the dochtor to fill in the gaps where they were slightly deficient. As you've surrendered a part of yourself, now sure there's no sinse in stopping. By the same token it's yourself you might be after giving to me entoirely. Such an illigant pair sure should be wed. Maybe you'd consint yourself and yer nose to marry myself and my nose mavourneen. It's axing you to be a wedded wife I am."

"O'Brien," replied Nurse Primrose, with some warmth, "If you don't behave yourself I shall ask Dr. Plastic to remove you from the ward at once. The idea! Go on with you, and your stuff and nonsense, I've no patience with the man."

"Surely you'll not be after doing that same now."

"Yes, I shall."

"Sure now, mavourneen, will you only be after considering awhile. If you'll only consint, the primrose will bloom where the shamrock grows."

"I wish you would be quick and grow your nose and take yourself off out of this ward."

"It's not my fault, my jewel darlint, as my nose is slow after it has been sculptured after your own illigant pattern. I'm not calling it a misfortune. Sure, didn't I hear Dochtor Plastic himself the first day I come here say, how if it had been a nose like yours, nurse now, that 'ud be something loike. And I arst him to put me the self-same nose on my own face as you have on your own. And it's by night and by day as I'm doing my best to make it loike the pattern I picked out from all the noses in the ward, the blessed dochtor's himself included, more power to him. So when we stand side by side, a-cuddling like, admiring ourselves in the glass, they'll think sure that the selfsame mother bore us. It's not my fault the growth is so slow."

This tirade was more than any nurse could answer, and Nurse Primrose wisely and abruptly left. But peace was not to be purchased so cheaply. The persistence and impudence of O'Brien led him to again address her when next she passed.

"Nurse Primrose avic," he said.

"Nurse Burns is your nurse now, No. 18," she replied; "you are not in one of my beds."

"More's the pity, my jewel. If yer'll take me back again, me darlint, I'll sware off the drink to anst."

"Drink, I should think you would. You have had quite enough drink to last you a lifetime."

"Me jewel, it's yer own bright eyes as is after deceiving you in troth. I never let on how I came by the loss of the member I'm after restoring upon an improved plan. If you'd sit down on my cupboard chair for one moment I could explain the whole troth to yer, and it's not so hard on me you'd be, mavourneen, a-passing me on to Nurse Burns loike selling a pig in a fair. Sure and it's a heart as I'll want next to be made by the dochtors."

Nurse Primrose, touched by pain in the tone of Patsy O'Brien's voice, sat down on his cupboard chair for a few moments to listen to his confession. Patsy continued :

"It's loike your sweet self now to be listening to my confessions, and may be, be after giving me the ablutions afterwards. Well, thin, Denis O'Flaherty and me was a-courting Bridget Flynn, at the Three Cows, by the corner of the Mate Market, to be sure.

"And it's a gay time we had on it. What wid the squeezings, and talkings, and a drop of the crature to kape up the fun, it's grand that it was. Whin Denis was busy with the cattle, it's myself as would be after consoling Bridget with the sound of me voice and me

illigant ways. But sometimes, when it's working I was, the mean thief of a Denis 'ud be taking advantage of my absence to poison the sweet soul of my Bridget agin me. It was his evil influence I was for iver counteracting. And I could see now if the swate creature was lift to the loikes of that thief Denis, it's a wrong would be staining the honour of Clare, and bringing disgrace on my counthry. So I just give Denis a bating, the thief! And his nose was lifted a peg under his eye loike, and I know'd Bridget couldn't a-bear that. Sure 'twould lessen the harm he was doing. She let on so about it, troth you'd a thought 'twas killed outright he was. It's drove mad I was entoirely by her goings-on, and I give up my slaughtering to be after consoling Bridget the livelong day, and prevent her seeing anything that was disagreeable to herself now and maybe turning her swate blood into wather. But divil a bit was my consoling and drinking in the bar parlour of any use, she was for iver gabbing and gabbing of noses and noses, and declaring me own was the ugliest one in the market—forgetting loike I'd left Denis no beauty. The morning Denis come in, the thief, with his nose more nor one side than iver, Bridget in troth made up to him loike, with her finicking ways, as I niver could stand, just to see how long 'twould take us to foight. It's right mad she'd got me by such goings-on and indacencies. Just after, too, I was expending my eloquence explaining

what a foine wedding we'd be after having, with the church bells a-ringing, and that gossoon, Denis, left out in the cold in the cow paddock, and the children from the school strewing flowers for my feet to walk upon, and the women a-dying with envy loike to see what a foine bridegroom Patsy O'Brien 'ud make with the flower of them all on my arm in a gossamer veil. 'Twas thin she ups and, says she, a-looking at Denis with honey in her eye :

"'It's never a wife of yours in troth I'd be, Patsy, as long as you've a nose like that on your face.'

"And that thief Denis lets on to laugh loike as if 'twere a foine joke she'd been making, so it's the knife as I took as we uses in pigging and I says :

"'If that's all as is keeping yer, Bridget mavourneen, from being the wife of Patsy O'Brien, you've not long to be single in troth.'

"Thin I come in here !!!"

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The narrative appealed strongly to the woman's heart of Nurse Primrose. Rough, garbled and forcible, it still struck a chord of sympathy in the noble instinct of her nature. She forgave him much because of one illustration of a reckless chivalry. Patsy O'Brien had conquered. Restored to favour, he was allowed to continue to slumber in a bed in the care of Nurse Primrose. Better, perhaps, had she continued to hold him in disgrace, for his importunities never ceased, though they varied in degree

day by day. One idea now possessed him, and that was to marry his nurse. Discarded by one ladylove who preferred his rival, he sought to find consolation by capturing another. O'Brien was not the only idiot who has lived to rue such folly. His proposals of marriage were numerous. The evening before his discharge, his nose was healed and presented a very respectable appearance. So well had it grown that there was nothing remarkable to notice about it except the white scar line round the edges. In view of his retirement he made a final appeal to his nurse to become his wife.

The shadows of evening had fallen and the ward was shrouded in dimness. Nurse Primrose stood at the table when O'Brien accosted her :

"Now, Nurse Primrose, it's to-morrow as 'ill be the last day I stay in the Hospital, and I am asking you now to come away from the sickness and diseases and the broken bones and be an ornament to my cabin. It's a mighty foine position as you'd be in, sure, as the lawful wedded woife of Patsy O'Brien, the cattle dealer, who'd rose to eminence through dealing in bastes and knowing all their diseases, and having walked the hospitals alearning of them. It's not as a journeyman I'm after asking you. It's at the top of the tree I'll be standing daling in meat. And it's to Parliament itself I'll be taking ye some day, dressed in the cream of fashion and me walking wid me stick ready to prod the other members loike

as is slow in their movements, wid diamonds and rings on me fingers and never the smell of the cattle on my clothes at all, at all. Sure now, mavourneen, you'll never be able to say no to such illigance."

"Do be quiet, Patsy, I have told you so many times I want nothing to do with you," said the nurse.

"But, me jewel, it's life as 'ud be lonesome widout ye, and when I'm out of the ward it's myself as you'll see waiting at the gates to escort ye in taking the air. I'll be yer bodyguard. If it's not consenting you are, it's the worst as'll happen to one or both of us, by the powers."

"Once and for all, Patsy, I never intend to let you see me again, so now you have it."

"Well, thin, it's yourself, mavourneen, as'll be the mother of murder. It's my claim as I'll not be after surrendering. It's suicide as is in my mind. Do you mind me. The death of an innocent man lays at your own door, my jewel, with yer desate and obstinacy. When it's dead we both are, avic, it's not so easy you'll be after dodging me. Sure, it's then time will lay heavy on my hands, and I'll be after waiting for yer in the nixt world—the nixt world, to be sure, mavourneen."

Then Patsy O'Brien moved back to his cupboard chair. He had much of the chivalry of the Celtic race. Chivalry often leads to disaster. He came to grief by offering himself to two unappreciative

women. For one sweet damsel he cut off his nose; for another sweeter damsel he's cut his throat. His last letter might well be his epitaph. Entered in the museum catalogue, it would add permanent interest to that terse, unexplained, almost unnoticed line which reads in these words:—

“7043. A FACE IN A BOTTLE.”

THE REV. JOSIAH CRUMBLEWELL, B.A.

JOSIAH CRUMBLEWELL was a student in theology; a thin, cadaverous-looking man; the nephew of a female gambler. His aunt—peace be with her now, she is no more in the flesh—gambled away every sovereign she could lay her hands on. In the end, instead of dying, as all good books would relate, in dire poverty and distress, she died in affluence, and surrounded by every comfort a lavish expenditure of money could give her. Any gambler can die in want; it takes a genius, not Josiah's aunt, inferentially a genius, to upset all pious teachings and die rich. A turn of fortune's wheel gave her fabulous wealth. Dame Fortune, still apparently smiling on the Crumblewell family, gave the wheel another spin. Josiah's aunt died before she had time to squander or gamble the money away. The Rev. Josiah Crumblewell, B.A., inherited the wealth.

Long before the supposed genius died Dame Fortune had cast a gentle smile upon the student in theology. It may have been prophetic of the good luck which subsequently blessed Josiah. The smile

was of such a character that it placed Josiah in possession of a dainty lady-love who figures as an influential character in this tale when his aunt dies. Whatmore could a man want? When Dame Fortune was frowning, as she did rather severely on the Crumblewell family anteriorly to the period when the gambler became a genius, the fearful example of a female gambler in full sail to perdition had much to do with driving Josiah Crumblewell into the ranks of the clerical army of the Church. "Aunt's weakness will make us both beggars," said Josiah, "Therefore, let me be a beggar of the first water." And he flew to the Church.

The opulence of his deceased aunt descending to Josiah before he had a grey hair on his head deprived the Church of his ministrations, and he joyfully bade a happy adieu to a white choker and a black frock-coat of clerical cut.

Any man who is rich can be honest. There's nothing in that. Josiah, after the demise of his aunt, was immaculate and irreproachable about matters of finance. Before that lamentable event he was as honest as he could afford to be—as honest as circumstances would permit. That wasn't much.

At college Josiah Crumblewell mixed with a set of medical students. These genial gentlemen, although mostly associating with men destined for their own profession, always admit a certain number of other

undergraduates into the family circle. Josiah had the privilege of *entrée*. He was a source of special psychological interest to them, for he was the battleground of a perpetual conflict. A fierce war raged in his organism. The character of the war can be judged from the words of one or two bulletins which were issued to the students by the seat of carnage himself. This is one, in the phraseology of the victim :

"The spirit was weak to-day, aye, very weak, and the flesh conquered. Ah, dear friends, the spirit requires fortifying and the flesh scourging.—Signed, J. C."

"Joe Crum," said Henner, commenting on the news in the bulletin, "has been up to some unusually dirty trick, else we shouldn't hear that bit of hypocritical cant from him. He'll want an *awful* lot more physic to recuperate. He's just preparing us for the second move, which points to advice gratis."

Then the contents of a second bulletin, which issued from the centre of devastating war, pestilence, and famine, in the organism of Josiah Crumblewell, would supply such information as this :

"The flesh was conquered this noontide, and is in full retreat ; the spirit is triumphant in all its glory. I'm glad no evil followed.—J. C."

"I believe he'll go balmy if he keeps on backing the flesh too often," said Barno. "He's putting his money on the wrong horse. In spite of his cant, I'm sure he is always backing the flesh."

“If he’d only put his *own* money on a horse and leave *ours* alone, it wouldn’t matter much,” rejoined Henner. “He owes me a fiver, and *has done* so for the last six months, and he borrowed Hoblyn’s Dictionary of me and left it somewhere when he says he was ministering to the spiritual welfare of a poor sinner. *Now* he’s up to something more. I *wish* he’d stop it.”

And yet a third time a bulletin would issue forth, usually at morning song, couched in such solemn and beautiful phrases as these :

“At vespers last night the spirit failed, utterly broke down and was not, and the flesh rode triumphant over all. Woe is me.—J. C.”

In a similar manner to the aspect depicted in such records did the great fight between the flesh and the spirit continue in the territory of the kingdom of Josiah Crumblewell.

It lasted as long as ever we were in touch with Josiah Crumblewell. There is valid evidence on record, however, to show that an honourable and lasting treaty of peace was subsequently concluded. It was ratified at the time his gambling aunt died, and Joe inherited her legacy and retired from the hallowed precincts of the Church.

When Henner was made acquainted with the evidence of a lasting peace between the flesh and the spirit, he ejaculated :

“Joe Crum always was a humbug, and I never

believed he *would* reform. Now he's become *decent*. I couldn't stand his hypocrisy with us. If it hadn't been for his taking little girl, I believe the fellows would have slung him out of our set long before we broke up and scattered."

Most of the advanced students used to prescribe for Josiah, although they were not qualified medical men. He was *always* taking medicine. He wanted it badly. Constitutional defects. Symptoms more pronounced when the flesh had conquered. It was whispered that even junior students had been allowed to prescribe for Josiah upon certain occasions. The occasions seemed to coincide with the arrival of a large remittance for the junior student. Whether Josiah swallowed the medicine he so religiously procured on the shaky prescription of a junior is highly problematical. Had he done so, there might have been trouble. Even Wilkinson, the idol of a fond mother, and a student in his third year, very nearly let us all in for an inquest by his irregular practice. It was when Joe Crum had an attack of acute bronchitis in the winter time. The spirit had lost several battles, and was in full retreat. Wilkinson had been specially reading up the uses of strychnine. He was overburdened with the knowledge of its uses. He was deficient in the knowledge when to withhold it. He had not dipped deeply enough into toxicology to remember its poisonous effects and the contra indications to use. So in the

acute stage of bronchitis he ordered full doses of it combined with iron for Josiah Crumblewell and the bronchitis. Josiah Crumblewell was rescued from an untimely fate by the intervention of some of our qualified men who were still studying at the hospital. No permanent harm accrued to Josiah. But *there*, nothing but misadventure need have been expected from Wilkinson, who always was sickly. He had been kissed too much by his mother. It is only a real mother's spoilt pet who would act in the way Wilkinson did on one occasion. It was in association, too, with Josiah Crumblewell. It came about in this way. Joe Crum came into our diggings when we were all reading hard. We didn't want to be disturbed, and didn't take any notice of him. Presently he drawled out: "Verily, I find I have come out without my purse to-day. A most unfortunate incident."

Parsons always carry a purse so as to have a bag handy to take up a collection should opportunity offer.

"I don't know, peradventure, whether any of you fellows have a couple of spare sovereigns?"

His aunt had been doing badly at the gambling business just then.

Josiah carefully scanned each countenance to see if there were any indications of signs of surrender to his challenge.

Everybody's brow was violently contracted over a

most difficult passage in medicine, and nobody heard him. It was in his aunt's worst days. We all knew it. She had had a lengthened run of ill luck. She and her nephew in collusion would have smashed a bank at *that* time, let alone a set of medical students. Mortal man couldn't stand the strain, so no one heard the appeal of the embryo parson. It's wonderful how even the youngest clerk in holy orders can make a heart-cutting appeal for funds. Josiah continued his appeal in this way :

"It's only for a couple of days, you know."

There was no prospect of his aunt's luck turning. Silence reigned.

Then Wilkinson, the milksop and mammy's pet, slowly drew forth two sovereigns, and handed them over to Joe.

It seemed as if a sigh of relief disturbed the silent air. The difficult passages in "Bristow's Medicine" were understood, and the corrugated brows were relaxed. The painful tension had vanished.

"It is not meet that I further disturb your studies, gentlemen," said Joe, as he retired. "Verily, I see you are deep in the depths thereof."

When he had gone half-way out of earshot, a spontaneous roar burst forth. Everyone joined in it except Wilkinson. *He* didn't see anything for the fellows to laugh at, and he had but little idea that anyone else could.

"Wilky, you are sold," said Henner.

"I don't see it at all," replied Wilkinson, somewhat nettled and disconcerted. "Joe Crum will pay it back all right. You see if he doesn't."

"When he's missionary to the cannibals in the Solomon Islands, eh?" asked Henner.

"No, I mean as soon as he has his purse with him," asserted Wilkinson.

Could any man be softer than Wilkinson? Fancy trusting an embryo parson with two pounds in circumstances of this character!

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Josiah Crumblewell had a young lady. Not a girl. Joe always called her his young lady. The fellows said, "Joe's girl." The young lady was named Lucy Turner. When Josiah was ordained he intended taking up missionary work in the South Sea Islands. For preference, in the cannibal group. As soon as Miss Lucy Turner was Mrs. Josiah Crumblewell she intended assisting the Rev. Josiah in converting the heathens. For preference, too, the heathens in the cannibal group. Miss Turner was nice—exceedingly nice. All our fellows thought so. So did Josiah. Proof positive that she *was* nice.

She had a small face, not a baby's face. Heaven forbid she should ever be a doll! Miss Turner knew a lot of things. Amongst others, how to take precious good care of herself. Knowledge is power. A pretty face is an everlasting source of danger. Miss Turner owned both. It requires profound

knowledge to keep out of danger when a young lady is pretty.

"There's a lot in a face," said Henner lazily, thinking of one face in particular. "Yes, a lot."

"A lot when it's a face like Miss Turner's," assented Barno, blazing up into unusual enthusiasm over it. "She's a most exciting little woman, Henner. 'Pon my word she is. Sets a man on fire at once. I don't know whether she has any effect on you, old man, but she rouses me at a glance."

"Some women have that sort of mesmeric influence over a man," said Henner, "especially when he's new at the business."

"She's too good for Joe Crum," said Barno; "she should look out for a man of my physique and stamina."

"Were you meditating taking her off his hands then?" asked Henner, with a drawl. "Relieving him of a burden of tinsel and fluff, eh? Your conceit is outrageous, Barno."

"It's no good, unfortunately," retorted Barno. "She won't budge. I wonder where he picked her up. Very fine girl, and no mistake about it. Where did she come from?"

"I don't know. Joe Crum is so artful and sly, it is impossible to say. He mouches about on the quiet. Why don't you ask her when and where Joe Crum was introduced to her. That would elicit the information."

"I did," replied Barno; "and she said it had nothing to do with the complaint she suffered from. If I couldn't find out some things, she went on, in a scathing voice, without asking the patients forbidden questions, then I should not be a success as a physician. That's how she put me off. Very smart of her."

"Were you prescribing for her?" asked Henner.

"No. That's the way she slipped out of it and made an ass of me," returned Barno; "showed she knew as much of medical decorum as I did, and a great deal more how to evade a question."

"I suppose," he continued, "you know the whim she has in her head at the present time, don't you?"

"Which whim? She has so many in such a small compass that I can't say I know until you state which one you allude to."

"The fighting fad—the contest mania."

"I am out of it. It's the first I have heard of such a whim. Did she box your ears or ruffle your hair?"

"Neither. It's this way," explained Barno. "As soon as ordained, Josiah Crumblewell is off to the cannibal group. Mrs. Joe goes too, when married to Josiah."

"She'll be safe there," interposed Henner; "the cannibals will never attempt to eat her."

"Eat her! Why not? I could eat her myself every day if she'd only let me. I'd give something

to be a cannibal king for a while when Mrs. Joe came sailing round to convert me."

"You're outrageous," said Henner.

"Why, man, it's as much as I can do when she comes in here in a glow on a hot day not to take a bite out of her as it is," said Barno. "She's beautiful and very tender."

"Stop it, Barno. You are hypnotised."

"I've a good mind to give Joe Crum a drubbing, and usurp his place myself," continued Barno, shaking his head.

"Oh, fudge," replied Henner; "go on with the Solomon group and King Fe-fi-fo-fum."

"Well, look here. Miss Turner can't bear the idea of such savagery, yet she is determined to stick to Joe when he goes amongst them. She has an abnormal dread of the killing process. Can't bear the idea. Doesn't know how it looks or feels. That makes her frightened."

"She'll get used to it in time," said Henner. "After a few black banquets of the Masonic order, with a skull and cross-bones dangling round the trifle and tarts, she'll feel quite at home."

"That's just where the difficulty is. She doesn't think she *will* get used to it. She is rather sensitive over the incidents. Joe Crum has tried his best by graphic descriptions to explain the killing process to her, but it hasn't much effect. It falls flat. He draws extensively on his imagination for details. It's a

vivid imagination, too, under the glance of Miss Turner. Sometimes he describes a sickly, flesh-creeping nightmare to suit her taste. It only mildly satisfies. Then he produces a well-painted word picture of a happy, sky-blue, sunny land, release from this wicked sphere, and the consequent flight of the soul to a place where the wicked cease from troubling and the tax-collector is at rest."

"I don't think that would satisfy her temperament, either, Barno, because she wouldn't have anyone to fuss round and chide. Then she only knows of a tax-collector from hearsay evidence."

"I don't think it would, either," agreed Barno. "She's too animated and vivacious. Joe Crum is fairly stumped over it. He's told her the truth, and he's told her an awful pack of lies in every grade of profusion and bloom. Still, her small, sweet voice cries for more."

"Why don't you take a hand and picture your own death-bed experiences?" queried Henner.

"I did. I travelled famously for a long way. She gloated over the minutiae and revelled in incidents. But where there is an Eve there is likely to be a serpent; there was here. The serpent spoilt the effect. I contradicted myself in making the scene more life-like and creepy. I expect it was some occult influence of Joe's over the conversation. It was when I described the passing away of the Rev. Josiah himself in the Solomon Islands that I spoilt myself."

"That was a cool way of turning her against Josiah," suggested Henner. Barno coloured up.

"It was not that exactly, but I liked to prepare her for all contingencies, especially an early widowhood in the Cannibal Islands. When the king sets eyes on her Joe's days will be numbered. She will be relieved of the clerical incubus. If they don't eat her, they'll make her a queen."

"If they know the amount of physic Joe Crum has taken," added Henner, "they'll think twice before eating a student's physic bottle. For that's all *he* is."

"I'd do anything to gratify her," said Barno; "but I can't think of anything. She insists on witnessing a real fight. Nothing short of *that* will pacify her. Joe took her by train from Waterloo to Windsor, one day, to see a royal review. He was assured on the best authority there would be a disturbance and people killed. The two of them spent the whole day crowding about. Their labours were in vain; they were nearly crushed to death themselves in the train coming home. Miss Turner's hat was spoilt; the flowers on it withered, and the feathers flew off. The journey ended in nothing. Miss Turner saw no one knocked out. She was greatly disappointed. It was hard on Joe, too, for his aunt had just backed a winner, and they were in funds."

"Why doesn't he take her to Hampstead Heath

on a holiday? There is sure to be a fight to a finish there," said Henner.

"He's been," replied Barno laconically.

"Or bring her back along the Old Kent Road and Elephant and Castle from Greenwich on Easter Monday?"

"They have tried it," said Barno; "it proved unsuccessful."

"Or the Whitechapel Road, round about the London Hospital?"

"No good," said Barno.

"Then what do you propose?" asked Henner, as he sat up and closed his book, with a snap.

"An idea has just dawned on me, Henner. Why not have a set-to ourselves. It's grand! it's noble!"

"How do you mean?"

"We're both heavy weights and fair with the gloves. We'll have eight rounds or a knock-out."

"For her edification?"

"Yes; why not?"

"But a knock-out for that?"

"It won't be much. Need not be a real staggerer, but only a little groggy."

"You're awfully far gone, Barno; there's no mistake about it," said Henner. "A nice girl is a nice girl, but a spar to a knock-out for the amusement or gratification of a woman is far fetched."

At this moment some other students came into the room and joined in the conversation. The

suggestion was received with hilarity and gusto. It suited their fancy, and, despite all opposition, the proposal was carried. Diversion is the safety valve of medical study.

Henner, who had not completely been carried away from common sense by the enthusiasm, urged some modification of the conditions. Barno, after some demur, agreed to the alteration. It was resolved it should be a scientific exhibition of boxing. If one or the other happened to receive a rather heavy blow, *that* could not be helped. They must chance that. Then, instead of eight rounds, the number was reduced to four rounds of three minutes each, with one minute interval.

"And what if we don't do enough to make it look like a fight to a finish?" said Barno, banging the arms of the chair with his hands. "Where shall we be *then*?"

"Oh! it *must* be made to look like a real knock-out," said Henner. "I'm not going into this foolery if it's to be vicious slogging, even for Joe Crum's girl. So there is my decision. Take it or leave it."

"She'll see enough of the real article in the Cannibal Islands," said a student. "No use teaching her all the phases of fighting too early. She might change her mind and refuse to emigrate to the Solomon Group."

"Just so," said some of the more moderate students.

"All right," said Barno; "we'll make it up in

proper style for her. I'll agree to your terms, Henner."

"Where's it to be?" asked Henner.

"Smith's father's stable loft is just the place," said a student, without consulting Smith, who was present.

"I know it," said Henner; "it will do splendidly. It's large and it's lofty; there is plenty of straw, and it's quiet. We can all go there decently, and Smith's governor will never know anything about it."

"Square the coachman," said Barno.

"Yes, and Smith can send the groom down here with his portmanteau to get *him* out of the way."

"If you gentlemen really mean business, I can manage our stable loft for you," said Smith, who had not even been asked whether he objected to his father's stable loft being so unceremoniously appropriated. Not that he cared much, so long as the project would furnish amusement to those assembled.

"I shall have to hide it from the governor, or he'll want to know too much. He wouldn't mind the boxing, but when it comes to providing an entertainment for Joe Crum's girl, he wouldn't understand where the fun comes in. As it is, he might come up in the middle of it, and see what was going on when there were so many of us there."

"That would be awkward," said Barno; "with Miss Turner presiding as Queen of the Sports."

"It would burst it all up in one round," said Smith.

"The governor must be kept out of it at any cost. It must be strictly private and silent."

So all agreed to keep the fight quiet.

"Right," said Barno. "I go into training instanter. In this style."

Saying which, he walked over to the sideboard, pulled out a bottle of beer, and drank off a couple of small glasses of it.

"I can't allow you to take advantage of me in that way," said Henner, who also walked over to the sideboard and helped himself to the rest of the malt liquor.

"Look at my triceps after that dose," he said, as he let out his left like a flash of lightning. "Do you think you could duck that lead, Barno?"

"I'm going to try, old man," returned Barno.

"Josiah Crumblewell will have to be told of the affair, I suppose," queried a student.

"No, not at all," said Barno. "Why should we tell him? I'll talk to Miss Turner about it myself. When it's all arranged, she can broach the subject to Joe, and then he'll appreciate our kindness."

"I think *I* had better talk to Miss Turner," interposed Henner. "She'll listen to me, and *know* I am not making love to her at the interview."

"*I'll* tell her," said Barno.

"No, *I* will," asserted Henner.

"No, *I* will," vociferated Barno.

"It's no good arguing the matter out in that way,"

said Smith, as he rose to go out. "The fairest way is to let the man who sees her first broach the subject to her. Then you two fellows won't quarrel over a woman, and the woman Joe Crum's own girl."

"All right," said Henner.

"Done," added Barno.

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There is little doubt but that Smith's father's stable loft was as fine a loft as existed in the West End of London. It occupied the major part of one of the dismal back gardens running back from a house in Russell Square. It nearly filled the garden, which was originally intended for air, sunlight, and a few flowers, when the house was built. The district, losing its wealthy stamp, induced property owners to allow the flower beds to decay, and replace them by stables. At this time all that thrived or grew of flora or fauna in these gardens were the ubiquitous cats of the neighbourhood. The extensive stable-loft boasted an entrance from the mews at the rear. A series of steps supplied the means of communication. Any extensive movement going on in the loft could be seen from the back windows of the house in Russell Square. Consequently, Smith had several trusses of straw carelessly shifted to block out the prospect.

At four o'clock one Monday afternoon, Josiah Crumblewell, Miss Lucy Turner, and some of our

fellows walked down the mews at the back of Russell Square, and ascended by the wooden steps to the stable loft. It was a unique gathering and historical event.

Two trusses of hay formed a throne for the Queen of Beauty at one end of the loft. On them sat Miss Turner. Josiah was slightly in the background. Smith had given the coachman half-a-crown to sweep out the loft. It had not been swept for years before. It wanted sweeping very badly. At the other end of the loft, where the straw was stacked, some bales were arranged as a screen to hide off a section of the loft which would act as a dressing room for the pugilists. Two rickety old stools were placed at diagonal corners of the imaginary ring. By the side of each stool was a whisky bottle of water, a sponge, and two towels. The set of six-ounce gloves lay in the centre of the ring. The students stood at each end of the loft in front of the hay and straw respectively. The paraphernalia of the pugilists, the company, and the Queen of Beauty, were all as they should be on such an occasion.

"It doesn't make such a bad ring, Miss Turner, does it?" asked Smith, who was by her side.

"It is very nice," said Miss Turner; "and so good of you, Mr. Smith, to go to so much trouble on my account."

"Yes," drawled Smith, "I have had all the bother of this affair. Barno and Henner only have to do a

little sparring. That's their share of the entertainment."

"You must have gone to a lot of trouble."

"Not so very much; but all that there was I arranged," he replied. "It will show you the way fellows knock each other silly, so I don't mind."

"How kind you are, Mr. Smith."

"It will familiarise you with the sights to be seen in the Solomon Group."

"Thanks so much," replied Miss Turner.

"Don't mention it," added Smith. "I'm delighted that you have deigned to patronise my sanctum in the loft."

"I'm so glad to come."

"One pug will soon settle the other," said Smith. "It doesn't take very long when they mean real business."

"How charming they are. Will it be long before they begin?"

"Not long now; I can hear their boots dropping behind the straw barricade at the other end."

"But they don't have to take off their boots, do they?" asked Miss Turner in astonishment.

"Yes, and put their soled ones on instead. Something like the South Sea Islanders wear."

"The South Sea Islanders don't wear any," laughed Miss Turner. "How stupid of you, Mr. Smith. A South Sea Islander's boots, fancy!"

"I forgot, I thought that was all they did wear."

A great deal of stamping and moving occurred behind the straw at the opposite end of the loft.

"Look sharp, Barno!" called out Smith.

"Take care of my waistcoat," said a voice behind the straw.

"Can I hold the waistcoats and watches, gentlemen?" asked Joe Crum. "Verily, I believe it is wiser to box without a watch in one's waistcoat pocket. I will hold them for you if you like."

"It will be quite unnecessary," said Smith, who entertained a suspicion that, all things considered, the watches would be safer at the other end of the loft and far from the custody of Joe Crum.

"A man might do worse than keep his watch in his pocket when he boxes," said a student, and everybody laughed at the inuendo except Joe.

"Precisely so," said Joe Crum. "But if there are any other valuables besides, I have no real objection to take them in trust. Any little trinkets, or things like that, would be so safe with me. Perfectly."

"Seems to me Joe's aunt has fallen in with bad luck again," said a student to another, and to the amusement of those who heard the remark.

"I only thought it right to mention the matter, as I am the only theological student present. I myself lost a gold stud not so long ago in the straw. There is sure to be something missing in such a place."

Miss Turner faced round and said, "Do please be quiet, Joe, you jar on my nerves."

"Were you in company in a loft?" asked a student.

"I really forget the circumstances of the case for the moment," replied Crumblewell; "but I know that my stud was missing."

"Be careful of confession, Joe Crum," shouted out a student. "Mind what you say."

"Decidedly, I only mentioned the matter because I thought watches or little trinkets might be lost in the straw."

"They might have a chance in the straw," said a student; "but I'm pretty sure they'd have no chance in the hay at the other end, with Joe Crum prowling round and his girl attracting everyone's attention in another direction."

"How much longer are we to wait, Mr. Smith?" asked Lucy Turner, in a state of expectant excitement. She was brighter and smarter than usual. "I'm quite dying to see the boxing match."

"Aren't you fellows ready yet?" asked Smith. "Don't hang it out too long, the governor might turn up at any moment and spoil the sport."

"All ready," said Barno in response, "we are right. Come on, Henner."

The pugilists emerged from the straw stack, Barno from one corner and Henner from the other. Barno had strapped his waist in tightly. His chest was over distended by inhaling an enormous breath. His neck was pulled back to add height to his stature and depth to his chest. His hair was

trimmed down close to the scalp. As he advanced his steps were short and rhythmical, like the advance of a stage acrobat, attired in tights and spangles, to orchestral music. He wore thin-soled lace-up boots and tinted socks showing above the tops of them. Round the centre of the body stretched a flaming red scarf which covered the upper edge of the knickerbockers. The knickerbockers reached below the knees, and the smallest of jerseys surrounded his lower ribs.

Henner emerged from the other corner of the straw bales. He was not quite so jaunty in his demeanour, and walked more like a panther advancing to attack. Henner prided himself on the *cleanness* of his muscles, which stood out from the surrounding tissues like bundles of rope. He relied on the exhibition of great strength to produce a favourable impression on Miss Turner. Being wiry and unpadded with fat, Henner kept every muscle tense and hard to display his power to the greatest advantage. He looked a powerful, swarthy man, with a black shade coursing down each side of the breast-bone. He was attired similarly to Barno, with lace boots and short knickerbockers. Instead of a red girdle he wore a sea-green one.

Both pugilists advanced to the centre of the loft where the gloves lay, and there they met. Miss Turner had turned round at the moment to converse with Joe Crum, and therefore was unaware that they

were there. Smith called out, although no one was smoking in the loft :

“ Pipes out, please, gentlemen.”

It stamped the affair with the sound of the prize ring.

As Miss Turner turned round Joe Crum simultaneously caught sight of the boxers. Both men looked at her to see what she thought of them, each anxious to receive a greater share of admiration than his friend. As soon as she fairly realised the scene presented to her view she gave vent to a loud scream and hid her face in her hands. Joe Crum was too dumbfounded and exasperated to be able to utter a word. He was wild. All he could do was to stand with his back to Miss Turner and face the boxers in paralytic astonishment.

“ Take me away, take me away *at once!*” cried Miss Turner.

“ What’s the matter ?” asked Barno.

“ Take me *away*, I say, take me *away*. Horrid !” repeated she.

Each boxer examined himself to be sure there was nothing amiss with him. They looked at each other.

“ She thinks you are horrid, Henner,” explained Barno. “ You’re too light. Sweated too much off. That’s it.”

“ No, it’s you she objects to,” retorted Henner. “ You haven’t trained down enough. You’re too fat.”

"You've frightened her," said Barno.

"Not a bit of it; it's you, Barno. You've had your hair cut."

"It's because you haven't that she's alarmed," asserted Barno.

"Take me *away*," again demanded Miss Turner.

"Don't you move," said Barno to Miss Turner. "Henner will retire and feed himself up a bit."

"Not exactly," laughed Henner. "You, Barno, go away and take more off."

"No, no!" screamed Miss Turner. "I shall *die* if you *do*, that's certain."

Smith, in utter astonishment, asked Miss Turner: "What's the row about?"

"Those horrid men," she replied. "Those awful creatures!"

"Hear that, Barno?" asked Henner.

"She's alluding to *you*," replied Barno.

"They are ready to box. It's all right, Miss Turner," said Smith. "What do you object to? What's wrong?"

"Disgusting!" said she, as she substituted her handkerchief for her hands to hide her face.

"What is disgusting with them?" wonderingly asked Smith.

"They haven't their coats on," she replied, twisting her position on the hay so as to face the side wall of the loft.

"Gentlemen," said Joe Crum, who at length found

his voice, "I enter my solemn protest against this abomination."

"What abomination?" asked the sceptical student who had referred to the safety of the watches.

"The abomination of the flesh," replied Joe Crum.

"There's no abomination about it," said Henner. Here's Barno been regularly shampooing himself and polishing his skin with Pomade de Rose to make it look superb."

"Verily the insufficiency of dress for modern culture on the lower plane is as a mill-stone round the neck. It is dragging me to perdition."

"Don't be such a darned fool, Joe," said Smith. "Did you expect them to be toffed up like dudes in Pall Mall? You must be silly."

"Oh!" ejaculated Miss Turner.

"Or wearing their watches?" said the cheeky student who had made a remark before.

"No, not so far as that, but this—this—is shameful," said Joe Crum. "An uncalled-for exposure of the integument."

"Take me *right away* at once," pleaded Miss Turner. "Its getting *worse*, I'm sure. At *once*, Joe, or I shall *faint* or do something bad. At *once*, I insist."

The two men in the centre of the loft stared at each other and then at everybody else. Barno's chest gave one sigh and collapsed. His energy had simply been wasted in a futile effort to display a fine physique.

Henner's cord-like muscles relaxed and fell in as soft as pap. "What's the use of a man making himself as tight as a piano wire when he is not to be played on? When he is strung up to concert pitch he wants thumping," thought he.

The other students, understanding the absurdity of the situation, smiled at each other but remained silent, awaiting developments.

"If they have to box they must peel off," said Smith.

"Joe," interposed Miss Turner, with asperity. "*Will you* take me away or *not*. The language is dreadful, even for students."

Joe was about to reply when Smith, addressing Miss Turner, said:

"Miss Turner, please do be reasonable. You can see the necessity for athletic attire."

"I don't want to see anything," she replied. "I've seen far too much, and now I am going home. *Joe*."

"The great impropriety of it is overwhelming," protested Joe Crum. "In mixed company and with a lady present, I never in all my ministration beheld such a thing. Even in Sodom and——"

"Joe, will you come away?" again asked Miss Turner.

"Certainly," replied Joe Crum; "but a man on the eve of ordination must denounce the wickedness of Satan. It would not be tolerated in the East End."

"What rot," said Smith. "If all the figures in oil in the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square were clothed as much as Barno and Henner are they might just as well shut up the gallery at once, because the majority of visitors would never visit it. They'd look in a tailor's shop-window in preference."

"And the company *is* mixed there—*deuced* mixed sometimes," said the cheeky student.

"It's highly indelicate," protested Joe Crum; "mortifying to the eye and an abomination unto the spirit."

"The art galleries, you mean, Joe!" said Smith. "I quite agree with you. The grossest indecencies are collected together in such places for men and women in company to gaze at."

"It is quite a different matter. It is a higher plane in life. Spiritual inspirations gathered together in the sacred name of art."

"Beastliness," replied Smith. "Filth in all its nudity. If a rose smell just as sweetly though called by any other name—then an indecent painting is just as indecent, though labelled *High Art*."

"I cannot agree with your views on art."

"So it seems, for here's the art of boxing, and nothing more immodest than a fashionable ball-room always brags of, and you are up in arms. Besides, it has the recommendation that it draws out the manliest instincts of the company, while the bareness in a ball-room cannot claim such justification. The ball-room

often engenders lascivious debauchery in the young as well as the old and decadents. Boxing doesn't do that."

"I cannot leave the ear open to such dreadful defilement of language," said Joe Crum, in a pompous tone, raising his hands by way of protest at the moment he closed both eyes.

"Rot, Joe, rot ; you're ratty, man."

"Miss Turner," said the cheeky student, "wouldn't you like to see the match? They are dressed in the usual boxing attire. The heavy blows concentrate the attention on the gloves."

"Oh *no*," replied Miss Turner. "I really *couldn't*. I never thought there would be so much of the *altogether* in it. Indeed I didn't."

"Corners," interposed another student. "Have a spell, boys, whilst the question of art is discussed, including the lower plane, the higher plane, and the *altogether*."

Barno and Henner, both very much dejected, moved to corners, and sat down on their respective stools in disgust. Henner rubbed his muscles, and Barno beat his chest. Joe Crum, for want of something condemnatory to say, issued a bulletin of himself in this oration :

"Verily I say, this day hath the spirit been dipped in vitriol and fine honey, and the body arrayed in sackcloth and ashes.—J. C."

"A hay loft and straw," said the cheeky student,

by way of correction. "Joe Crum, your bulletins from the internal seat of war are considerably mixed, besides being pure cant."

"I have *asked* Joe to take me away," said Miss Turner, in appeal to the company; "but he won't do it. Will *anyone* escort me?"

"I can't see any use in him doing so," said Smith. "If you are both determined to go to the Solomon Group amongst the cannibal blacks, you may as well imbibe a little experience in our humble stable loft."

"Mr. Smith, the cannibals are *black*," said Miss Turner, quickly and crushingly. "I shouldn't mind *them*. But flesh colour is *too dreadful*." Such is woman's usual support of a question, and denunciation of an opposition argument.

"I verily must believe, Smith, that you are unmindful of the fact that Miss Turner will be Mrs. Josiah Crumblewell in that far away land. The wife of a South Sea Island missionary, even though he be an unworthy labourer in the Lord's vineyard, may do almost anything in her own special sphere of action without having a stone cast at her." And Joe Crum posed in a stately attitude to emphasize his grandiose accents and sentiments.

"If I fetch the blacking bottle, Miss Turner, and give them a rub over for you, will that do?" asked the cheeky student of the young lady.

"Pray don't. It wouldn't make them *black all through*, like the savages are," she replied. "They wouldn't have black *bones*!"

"The colour doesn't much matter," said Smith. "Black skins will not grow black feathers on the cannibal tribe. Niggers don't have black bones, either."

"The conversation is horrible," said Miss Turner. "If one of you gentlemen would only take me away from this nasty loft, I would do *anything* in the *world* for you."

Barno rose from his seat, but thinking better of it, sat down again.

"This boxing won't do you any harm," said the cheeky student, in expostulation. "You had better begin your education now. It's not bad. And it's so suitable for the wife of a missionary, and the widow of a Christian, who was eaten before her own eyes by a set of cannibals."

"Don't, *please* don't," protested Miss Turner.

"If you were a lady student, you'd have to go into a lot more *than this*. There's no *mistake* about it," explained Smith, coming to his friend's assistance.

"But I'm *not* a lady student, and I don't want to be one. It's disgusting."

"They like it," smiled the cheeky student.

"Horrible!"

"They wear themselves *blind* over it, and have to buy powerful spectacles to see more," he continued.

"Joe, *will* you take me away?"

"As soon as Barno and Henner will withdraw from the gladiatorial arena, my dear, we can descend

the ladder, and flee from Belial to the mews adjoining."

"Lady students don't have a chance of going to the cannibal islands as wives, either," persisted the cheeky student, getting in as many parting shots as possible before they could leave the loft.

Barno and Henner simultaneously rose from their stools, kicked them away in disgust, and walked back behind the bales of straw. The curses they muttered were not loud, but strong.

Miss Turner, all blushes and coquetry, accompanied by Joe Crum, tripped lightly across the floor to the loft steps, and descended them. As her head was about to disappear she cast one swift arch glance around and surveyed every face in the circle. A glance which seemed to say, "What do you think of that for a smart girl?"

"She has caught some of Joe's artifice, I believe," said the cheeky student, "and is putting a lot of this extreme modesty on. His bad influence is corrupting good manners."

Untrammelled by Miss Turner's presence, the students gave free vent to their feelings, and Joe Crum received one of the worst characters ever given to any man.

Barno and Henner returned to the ring, and, throwing off all restraint, had eight good vicious rounds to soothe their ruffled feelings.

The company became so boisterous, cheering and

chaffing, that Smith's father put his head up into the stable loft to ascertain the cause of the riot.

Their blood being up, the students very generously, but indelicately, invited the old gentleman to enter his own premises. The genial old gentleman took them at their word, accepted the proffered hospitality and was inducted into Lucy Turner's late seat, unconscious even of the existence of its former tenant.

"Dear me," said the old gentleman, sniffing several times, "this hay must be fermenting or going musty. It must be seen to. It has a peculiar and strong smell of—of—of eau-de-cologne! Very peculiar—very peculiar."

"Patchouli," muttered the cheeky student under his breath to his comrades, so that the old gentleman did not hear him.

"I have never noticed such a strange bouquet in hay before. Perhaps some aromatic herbs may have sprung up in the meadow. William must not allow our horses to eat it, it may^rbe very exciting."

The old gentleman wondered what they were all laughing at.

"Dangerous to man and beast," laconically added the cheeky student.

* * * * *

"It all ended in a *fiasco* because of Joe Crum's nonsense;" asserted Barno, a few weeks after the stable loft incident, when discussing the affair with

Smith and Henner in the sitting room. "If he hadn't been such a hypocritical muff we'd have had a splendid bit of fun. It was very annoying."

"I don't think Joe was altogether to blame," said Henner. "It was Miss Turner's fault, as well. The first thing she did was to scream when she caught sight of us, just as if a mouse had run over her foot. I can't make out whatever made her do it. Such ridiculous nonsense."

"Women's nonsense," added Smith, "is unaccountable. What do they do half their tricks for? No man really knows, and no other woman knows, either."

"Generally they are performed with a view to captivate a man, to catch his eye, and fix his attention. An exhibition of a little more erraticism than a rival at the moment can display. That's the secret of half their capers," explained Henner, in a tone of decision and authority.

"But this wasn't an occasion for any parade like that. She was alone. No rival was there," asserted Smith.

"I know that," replied Henner. "Then she was either having a full-dress rehearsal, or it resulted from the force of habit."

"It was the undress rehearsal she objected to," chimed in Barno.

"You don't know," went on Henner, "half the hidden springs which move a bewitching little woman.

Her most captivating movements, instead of being spontaneous acts springing from mental alertness, are often simply well planned, and acted scenes concocted for allurements."

"That's rather sweeping," said Barno; "I don't believe Miss Turner would go to that length. She's so different from the others."

"Ho! ho!" laughed Smith. "If she's a woman she'd go to any length. Consequences or remote consequences never enter into their calculations. Whether they will or will not do anything at the present instant is decided irrespective of the future. That is the last thing which enters their heads. It's simply this kind of logic: Is this pleasant *now*, or is it unpleasant *now*? At this instant? At this very moment? On the spot?"

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," said Smith, coming to Henner's assistance, and mimicking Joe Crum's voice and manner. "That's a woman's proverb, and no mistake."

"They don't look to the future when it might interfere with their inclination in the present. Hence arises the dangerous character of the weaker sex."

"But, Miss Turner, my dear fellow, is not as other women are," protested Barno; "she's not full of artfulness."

Which shows that Barno was, like any other man, in love for a short time. Generalities didn't apply to

his flame. Had he thought Miss Turner the same sort of ordinary woman as those intimate with men of his own set, he wouldn't have gone to the trouble of oiling himself all over for a week to improve the shine of his skin. Nor would he have used lime water and sulphur for eight persistent acne spots on his back. He was too conceited to trouble himself. The collapse of the boxing bout had rendered all his labour in vain.

"If you look at her through uncoloured glasses," replied Henner, "she is just about the same. She is very pretty, I'll admit—quite fetching—but she isn't such an immaculate goddess as you fellows imagine."

"Why the deuce, then," asked Barno, "did you take a daily Turkish bath to try and get rid of the fat between your muscles. Eh?"

"To reduce weight," said Henner, in the most casual way. "Not to fascinate any woman in particular. Besides that, I wasn't going to let you beat me if I could help it, old man. Woman, or no woman, I didn't want to be beaten."

"'Pon my soul," interposed Smith, "I believe the pair of you are quite as bad as a woman—fearfully vain—one polishes himself up and the other sweats himself down so as to cut a good figure before Joe Crum's girl—and she above all women in the world."

"It wasn't that altogether with me," said Henner.

"Nor with me," said Barno.

"You both did it, though."

"I wasn't going to be knocked out by Barno in love," asserted Henner.

"And I wasn't going to let Joe Crum's girl think my skin was rough under the shirt front — not exactly," added Barno. "She might have thought she was looking at Joe Crum himself if I did. Is it likely, either, that I wanted eight acne spots counted by a fragile, pert little woman in a bewitching hat? It isn't sense. I had to be retouched like a photographer's negative."

"Any way, the affair ended in a fizzle after all the training," said Smith. "Joe Crum's girl ought to be cured of her fancy to view a knock out. Don't you think so? She must have had enough by now."

"Not a bit of it," manfully asserted Barno, "I have reconnoitred the position. As long as the contestants are black she'll be satisfied—as black as the cannibals themselves, if possible. White flesh, healthy and fine, like my own, for instance, has resulted in a shock to her system. It's surprising, too, that it should be so, for her own *fiancé*, Joe Crum, is ghastly livid himself. She must be turning against the colour of good men."

"Barno, your conceit of your physical construction is extraordinary," said Henner.

"If I don't fancy myself, my dear fellow, is it likely any one else could be led to believe in me?" replied Barno. "A man who doesn't believe in himself has formed a very good estimate of his real worth."

"And, inversely, a man who does, has formed a bad one, that's what it comes to," said Smith.

"Not altogether," said Barno. "It may be a little higher than the conditions warrant, but it is always subjected to large discount in the hands of his enemies and *also his friends.*"

"I was thinking," said Smith, diverting the conversation into another channel, "that Joe Crum's dainty little morsel might be nicely satisfied, and her intense desire to see a fight appeased, if she could view a contest in the human body—say a fight to a finish between disease and health."

"Whatever are you talking about?" asked Barno. "A fight between disease and health is too common to be of interest to any one but the invalid."

"Barno, you don't understand; I mean a fight in the body itself—a real physical battle."

"Between a worm and a kid, eh?"

Henner rolled off the couch on to the floor in laughter. Smith was also convulsed by Barno's family idea of a contest in the body.

"What else can you be talking about?" hastily queried Barno. "If that is *not it*, what is?"

"What I say; a fight to a finish in the body. It goes on every day. It is a never-ending battle."

"What are the colours of the combatants?" asked Barno, in a jocular tone. Barno had not advanced so far in his course of medical study as Smith or Henner, and therefore he was unaware of the

physical facts which are well known at the present day—facts which read like fiction when first perused, but which, nevertheless, can easily be demonstrated by modern optical instruments.

“What are the colours of the combatants?” again inquired Barno.

“White, red, any colour almost,” replied Smith.

“I don’t follow you.”

“Perhaps not. You are not yet up to us in the latest investigations in bacteriology and physiology.”

“How’s that? In what way?”

“This way,” returned Smith. “Lately it has been proved by positive observation in favourable conditions that every human body generates millions of small cells which are almost colourless and possess amœboid movement; that is, they possess the property of changing their shapes in an irregular manner as long as they live.”

“I suppose, then, they are the colour of Joe Crum.”

“Yes,” said Smith, “about as devoid of colour as Joe Crum. They measure about a two to three-thousandth part of an inch in length. About the size of a white corpuscle, ain’t they, Henner?”

“Somewhere about that size,” replied Henner. “I know they can migrate to almost any part of the body. So they are very small indeed.”

“But what are their functions,” asked Barno; “I am not up to it yet.”

“They constitute a militia force to defend the body from foreign invasion.”

"What are you giving us, Smith?" expostulated Barno, who hardly liked to deny the statement, and yet thought they might be tricking him.

"Only the latest proved scientific facts. When a germ of disease is taken into the body by the breath, by drink or food, it makes itself a home in the tissues, if it is to live and multiply in the body."

"Sort of an immigration of Russian Jews," said Henner. "Foreign paupers, or parasitical labour coming to a new land to take charge of the country and turn the natives out, or let them sweat and starve. That's about as good a simile as I can think of."

"The germs of disease settling in the tissues of the body," continued Smith, in further explanation, "generate a certain amount of toxin or poison, which circulates through the system."

"They poison the patient on whom they have descended, eh?" said Barno.

"Yes. There is no doubt about that part of it. The toxin is a product of the microbe, either an excretion or a secretion. The toxin is of so violent a character that if there be much of it produced in the patient's system the patient surely dies."

"It reminds me of the dirty Asiatics," interposed Henner, "who are being allowed to overrun Greater Britain. They take their filthy diseases with them to the new lands and poison Britain's sons in her colonies. It isn't the coloured brute so much that

is objected to as his habits and the beastliness he disseminates amongst the sons of England."

"That's exactly it," added Smith. "The microbes of disease invade the tissues and produce toxins, which cause the special set of symptoms by which we diagnose the nature of the complaint."

"But what about these militia cells?" asked Barno. "Where do they come in?"

"I'm coming to that. In the body there are millions and millions of little white cells called phagocytes."

"Called what?" asked Barno.

"Put it down in phonetic spelling like this," interposed Henner; "faj-o-sites. Three syllables."

"Phagocytes!" said Barno. "Right away!"

"Their special function seems to be to act as a militia, and attack and destroy the microbes of disease whom they find in any part of the body."

"You are not running me, are you?" questioned Barno, in a dubious tone. "No Joe Crum about this, is there?"

"No, replied Smith; "nor Joe Crum's girl, either. This has all been seen and proved to ocular demonstration."

"Fire away, then. It's slightly interesting."

"Instantly the phagocytes detect germs of disease they sail into them at once. A pitched battle ensues. The reserves are called out, phagocytes arrive in regiments. Battalions are poured into the battle-

field to slaughter the germs. The irritation of microbes and their discharges of toxin cause increased activity in the parts affected, in proportion to their number and virulence. The blood vessels dilate. More blood flows there, bringing down endless battalions of phagocytes, or the progenitorial protoplasm of phagocytes. A fight to a finish results, and one side or the other conquers."

"By Jove," said Barno, jumping up in tumultuous delight, "you've got the very thing, old man. A fight to a finish, and the winner turns cannibal and eats up the vanquished warrior. Hooray!"

Barno frantically danced round the room and slapped Henner on the back with the force of a horse kick.

"For goodness' sake, Barno, sit down!" imperatively ordered Henner.

"What do you think of that, old man?"

"It's all right," replied Henner, "but don't make so much row over it."

"All right, by Jove,—I should think it was. It's saved you."

"How's that?"

"Why, when I had knocked you out in the boxing and you had dropped dead—very likely in the first round—I should have had to eat you up in a cannibal fashion to make the play true to life."

"Miss Turner looking on from a throne of hay," interjected Smith, "and dangling her bangles as weird music to a savage orgie."

"Miss Turner smiling down on the grand scene all the while," continued Barno, in good-natured banter.

"Or else looking attentively at the eight acne spots on your back," said Henner.

"No," said Barno, "only at me killing you and eating a morsel. The germs have saved you, Henner; they can go through the whole show, even to the cannibal scene in the thrilling tragedy of 'Health *versus* Disease,' act seventy-five, scene forty-one."

"What an advantage that'll be to Mrs. Joe Crum," stated Henner. "Also to myself."

"And the governor will not again mistake patchouli for musty hay," said Smith.

"Grand idea," said Barno. "By Jove, it's grand. How are you to arrange it, Smith?"

"Arrange what—the fight?"

"Yes."

"We'll admit her to the entertainment, and she can remain outside the ropes," said Smith.

"In your governor's stable loft on this special occasion?" asked Henner.

"Not likely," replied Smith. "The thing requires thinking out. She'll have to see the great tragedy which is perpetually enacted in the human body, by the aid of a high-power microscope."

"Let us do it straight away," said Barno.

"I tell you what," said Smith; "you'll have to get a double microscope, so that two can see the same

thing at once. Otherwise she will not understand the occurrences that transpire beneath the lens. They require explanation as they occur."

"Joe Crum is not coming into this affair," emphatically asserted Barno. "He spoilt the last, and he shall be kept out of this show. I'll punch his nose if he tries to come in."

"Well, then, don't tell him anything about it. I think I can manage to rig up a double microscope," said Smith.

"I'll guarantee to keep the glass slide at blood heat, so that the phagocyte and the germ will not be frozen to death," said Henner.

"Very well," said Barno; "and as there are two of you, one can lower the gas and the other swear we are all out in case anyone calls. For my own part, I don't mind holding Miss Turner's head in proper position above the eyepiece of the microscope, and at the same time I can watch the battle myself by looking through the other microscope."

Smith and Henner laughed at the cool way in which Barno disposed of them, and appropriated all the honour, glory, and pleasure to himself.

Eventually they agreed to let him demonstrate the first conflict she would see under the microscope between a phagocyte and a microbe.

All could not see at once. If Miss Turner liked to watch any more fights of the same class, the other students would take it in turns to act as guide.

Each in turn would hold her head; each in turn impressively squeeze her hand; each in turn crush up as closely as possible to her.

So it was agreed.

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The time for this strange exhibition of physiological *versus* pathological life arrived in due course. An extraordinary arrangement of microscopes, the invention of Smith and an optician, enabled two people to see the same object under the lens at the same time. As the optician will probably patent the mechanism, the specification of the invention will be open to the public when entered on the records of the Patent Office.

Smith had provided the ordinary warm slide for a microscope. It consisted of a glass microscope slide clasped by a metal plate. A wire extended from the metal plate to the flame of a spirit lamp, in which it was kept heated. The heat was conducted along the wire to the glass slide, and maintained the slide at a temperature equivalent to that of the human body.

On the slide was a drop of serum, or watery part of the blood, which Henner had procured by cutting the arm of a *tough nurse*, who was known to be swarming with phagocytes only too anxious for a fray.

The microscope made it plain there were plenty of phagocytes listlessly floating about, and languish-

ing for want of a fight with anybody except themselves ; like soldiers you see loafing round the barracks, having nothing to do.

Smith was deputed to procure a mob of micrococci of scarlet fever. They are the special organisms which produce scarlet fever in human beings. Smith obtained a large supply from the tonsil of a patient in one of the wards, who was suffering from malignant scarlet fever.

Miss Lucy Turner arrived radiant and happy half-an-hour before the appointed time. Barno tried to persuade her to make it an hour before time, as his friends would not be there very early. Miss Turner steadfastly refused. Barno's eloquence failed.

"I shan't come too early, as I don't want to be too tired before it begins," she remarked.

Barno had to be satisfied. When she did arrive, it took a long time to find the bonnet-pins and remove them, and a longer time still to disentangle the veil. It was Barno's fault, as his readiness to assist her only retarded the work. She managed to disengage her hat. Her hair was fluffy and fine. Barno wished to pat it down flat on her head so that it would not be in the way. Miss Turner declined to let anyone interfere with the arrangement of her hair.

"Now, I'm ready," said she, as she sat smartly down on a chair and folded her hands together in her lap.

"I can see that," said Barno. "This reminds me of the stable-loft fight, Miss Turner."

"What does?" asked she. "My hat or the veil?"

"Neither," replied Barno; "I mean the fight to a finish, cannibalism of the wicked winner, and *the smell of musty hay*."

"The smell of musty hay, indeed," she said, nodding her head in an offended way; "it's quintessence of new-mown hay I have round my collar. It's a most refreshing and suggestive perfume."

"Of Smith's father's stable loft?"

"No, you silly man; of the hay-fields and harvest-home and the country and romping."

"Oh, let's have the romping now. I'm ready."

"I daresay you are, but I'm not," said Miss Turner. "I am quite satisfied to have the odour of new-mown hay round me without the romping."

"I can't believe that is the name of the perfume," said Barno.

"Can't you, indeed?"

"No, I can't; allow me to judge for myself," and Barno went over and judged for himself.

"If you don't sit down on the other side of the table, I shall go away till Mr. Smith arrives," said Miss Turner.

Barno surrendered. He had attired himself in the thinnest of thin alpaca coats buttoned with three buttons of small size. He did not wear a waistcoat.

"It's quite useless putting on a waistcoat," said he, "in such a case as this. We may get to close quarters acting as referees in the fight between phagocyte and microbe. It would be most ungentlemanly of me to push Miss Turner away from her part of the microscope with a bundle of thick clothes. On the other hand, as a referee I should have to be impartial, and stick to my own point of supervision."

Miss Turner had not long to wait for the arrival of Henner with a few drops of *tough-nurse serum*. He soon placed a drop on the microscope slide. Both gentlemen and the lady present examined the serum, and were satisfied it contained all the life they required for their purpose. They waited a short time for Smith, who had engaged to procure Scarlet Fever Microbes.

He came running and bustling up the stairs, hot, panting and pleased.

"I have them!" he exclaimed, as he pushed open the door and stepped into the room. "It's all right."

"Right," said Barno, swinging his arms round. "Let me have a look! where are they?"

Smith deposited the closed test-tube on the table; then he carefully withdrew the cork, and with a long bonnet-pin borrowed from Miss Turner's hat and carefully cleansed by a handkerchief, and made sterile by heating in the spirit-lamp flame, he re-

moved a small portion of the semi-fluid with the needle, and stirred up the drop of serum on the slide with that useful article.

Henner dropped a cover-glass over the serum, and slipped it under the combined microscope.

"Down with the gas, Smith," cried Barno. "Close and fasten the door, Henner. Put the screen in front."

The students obeyed the orders.

"Come on, Miss Turner, squeeze into this arm-chair with me; there is plenty of room for two of us."

"It's not large enough for both," expostulated Miss Turner. "I shall crease my dress."

"Yes, it is—plenty of room for both of us. I have no waistcoat on," cried Barno, "and a little crease or two will take off the too new appearance of your dress. Don't waste time."

They soon found the only available seat, that was the arm chair, was amply commodious enough for them both. Barno sat on the right-hand side and worked the fine adjustment of the microscope to focus the sight to the engagement.

"See them?" he asked.

"No, where?"

"They are sparring already. Swimming and floating round in the fluid."

"Where are they? I can't see them," said Miss Turner.

"There are two in the centre of the field of vision ; don't you see them ? "

"Those two floating things like rings, do you mean ? "

"Rather," replied Barno. "Those are they. If you fellows care to take notes I will describe the fight," said he, addressing Smith and Henner.

"I think I *must* jot down on paper the account of this combat," said Smith. He began to read from his notes :

"In the presence of Her Royal Highness the Princess Lucy, of Cannibal Islands, Solomon Group—"

"Don't be a fool, Smith ; record my observations without exaggeration or bias, or taking advantage of the situation to make up to Miss Turner."

"Well, let me have it in terse language, and we'll read the muddle you make of it afterwards," returned Smith, as he proceeded to write in the dim light shed by the lamp, whose power was focused on the microscope mirror.

"I don't see exactly which they are," said Miss Turner. "Please show me again ? "

"Wait a minute," said Barno, as he took occasion to put his hand on Miss Turner's head, to keep her eye close to the glass, "I will pick out the best for you." He shifted the slide first this way, then that, and finally came back to about the original position. "These two mean business," he ex-

claimed. "We'll watch these, I think, Miss Turner. They are the best."

"Tell me exactly where they are, do."

"Come closer, and I can put you on to them. That's better. You see that little podgy fellow in red, in the centre, drifting towards the left-hand side?"

"What, that round little thing, the colour of the carnation in my hat?"

"Yes, the red carnation."

"Is that one?"

"Rather," replied Barno.

In all public boxing contests the principals are introduced by name and record to the audience. Barno did not forget what was due to the present auspicious review by withholding a regular, formal announcement of the competitors. He adopted the style of the illiterate man who, in a gruff voice, usually performs this office, and said:

"Genelmen, this 'ere is Micrococci Scarletinae, who 'as killed more kidneys than any living bloke, and perforated more ear drums than any cove alive."

"Oh, how vulgar!" remonstrated Miss Turner.

"It isn't vulgar, it's technical to the prize ring," retorted Barno. "It wouldn't be a regular set-to unless you had that kind of introduction."

"I hope Mr. Smith is not writing that down," said Miss Turner.

"I can't help it," replied Smith; "I must give a

more accurate and truthful account than a daily paper would do ; so down it goes, Miss Turner, your remarks and all."

"My remarks?"

"Yes, your remarks too, and they may be used in evidence against you ; so please be careful."

"Oh, bother!" exclaimed Miss Turner. "Never mind. Where's the other?"

"To the left," said Barno. "Don't take any notice of those roughs breaking into the ring on all sides, keep your eyes on these two."

"That pale one moving more to the left?"

"Yes, that is he. A large, flabby colourless fat fellow. He is Phagocyte. Genelmen, this 'ere is Fajosite, who beat the 'eaviest weights in Hingland. 'E beat little measles, diptheriee, and small pox, and now 'e took on Scarlet. They fights to a finish for the gate and the championship of the country."

"They are coming together now," said Miss Turner.

"Shake hands, boys," said Barno, in the tone of the referee.

"Now they are dodging round," ejaculated Miss Turner.

"Yes, see them sparring round for an opening. Time has been called."

"What time?" innocently asked Miss Turner.

"Time to stand up and box or else be counted out," replied Barno. "Time to begin. See, they keep on

working round to the left. Did you see Phago lead with his left and Scarlet duck? Good, good!"

"Do you mean that long piece that came out and went back?"

"Yes, that is it. No doubt, his arm."

"Slap! whack! Ah, they have clinched."

"They are stuck," said Miss Turner.

"Clinched," said Barno; "you mean clinched. Break away, break away! They won't; they are fouling."

"What's fouling?"

"Why striking foul blows."

"Can't they scratch anywhere?"

"No, they mustn't hit below the belt. Don't report this little bit, Smith," said Barno.

"Why not?" said Smith. "I'm not going to do the thing by halves. Every word goes down."

"They won't leave go," said Miss Turner. "Do you think they have hold of each other's hair?"

"I don't know whether they have any," replied Barno.

"Now they've broken. Look at Phago! he is winded. See Scarlet following him up right across the ring. Bravo, Scarlet! you jabbed him."

"He only just went near and moved away."

"He had time enough to leave a heavy blow on Phago, though," said Barno. "Now they are exchanging. That's a heavy cross counter. Phago is as tenacious as a leech. See, he is following Scarlet up."

"Scarlet jumps up and down when Phago tries to knock him," said Miss Turner.

"Yes, he's nimble on his pins," said Barno.

"Now they have clinched again."

"Stuck once more," said Miss Turner, in her own expressive language. "How very funny."

"Now Scarlet has Phago by the leg; look, look, he's throwing him. Foul. Foul!"

"Where's the fowl?" innocently asked Miss Turner.

"A foul act," explained Barno, highly amused; "not a barn-door fowl."

"Oh, I see. How stupid of me. He has turned him over."

"Yes, thrown him right over his head."

"Look at those others coming into sight," said Miss Turner.

"They've broken into the ring, the blackguards," said Barno. "It'll end in a shindy."

"What's that?"

"A free fight," explained Barno. "Any man hits any other man. Friend or foe it's all the same. Now they have broken again. They've called corners."

"Where are the corners?" asked Miss Turner.

"Corners means they retire to their respective corners for a rest," said Barno.

"The two stools you and Mr. Henner sat on in Mr. Smith's stable loft, do you mean?" asked Miss Turner.

"Exactly," interposed Henner, lying full length on the couch in the rear. "You have touched Barno on a tender spot."

"I'm sure I've not. My hands are on the table," returned Miss Turner.

"What are they up to now?" asked Smith.

"Scarlet looks ever so much redder than before," said Miss Turner.

"Well, I should think so," asserted Barno; "after he has had to lift that heavy weight Phago and throw him over his head."

"I think I can see a little pink geranium on Phago," said Miss Turner. "Isn't he changing colour?"

"Broken nose," laconically replied Barno. "Scarlet got home."

"Where's Scarlet's home? Do tell me. On the right hand side?"

"It doesn't mean that," replied Barno. "It means he landed Phago a heavy blow. Very likely a swinging upper cut."

"Oh," said Miss Turner.

"They are at it again. See Scarlet go right over and jab him time after time. Phago's too slow for Scarlet."

"Phago is so much bigger, he must win," asserted Miss Turner.

"I expect he will," returned Barno. "Look, he's almost surrounded him."

"No, he's away again ; isn't it dreadful ? "

"Phago's got him again. Finish him off, Phago, finish him off. Bravo, that's punishing him."

"Scarlet has escaped, look, and he's going round Phago. Phago can't move. See Scarlet knocking him everywhere," exclaimed Miss Turner.

"I think he has finished Phago. He's groggy," said Barno. "No he hasn't, though. Phago has smothered."

"He can't be smothered, because Scarlet keeps on running in and back again," said Miss Turner. "That can't smother him."

"Smother means cover up the head with the arms. See, he's covered himself, and lets Scarlet punch his heaviest. He looks like a round ball."

"Is that what it means ? "

"Yes, shielded his head with his arms."

"Look, he's very quiet, and how hard Scarlet works ! "

"By Jove, good, good ! Phago was only playing possum after all. He has caught Scarlet when he was tired ; look at his arms and legs round him. He is hugging him like a bear. That isn't boxing."

"Can't Scarlet get away ? "

"Don't think so. No, see Phago is closing round and round him. He's finishing him off."

"Scarlet seems to be completely hidden."

"Yes, completely surrounded. The fight is over and the feast begins. By Jove, it was very good."

"The cannibalism act in the tragedy," interjected Henner, from the back. "That is the way the health particles destroy the disease microbes."

"Do you mean to say he's eating him?" said Miss Turner, in horror.

"Yes," replied Barno. "The fight to a finish is concluded. Phagocyte has won. The scene has changed to the South Sea Islands; a guaiava grove in the Solomon Group. Holy Moses!"

"Don't be so horrid," said Miss Turner.

"I'm only explaining the occurrence for Smith to note in his report. Act twenty-one and a half. Characters, Phagocyte and Micrococci *Scarlatinæ*. Curtain rises, they are in close confabulation."

"Don't," said Miss Turner.

"Disappearance of Micrococci *Scarlatinæ* before one's eyes. Phagocyte swollen to the size of a boa constrictor who has swallowed an ox."

"You *are* nasty. I shall get up now."

"It's only what has occurred," continued Barno, as he pressed Miss Turner tightly against the arm of the chair. "When you visit the Cannibal Islands, and the king swallows Joe Crum and a ton of literature from the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, Smith will send his report to the papers for publication as an accurate account by an eye witness. He need only change the names to Joe and Black."

"Mr. Smith, I wish you would turn up the gas,

please," said Miss Turner, as she struggled out of the chair.

"As Phagocyte has completely digested Scarlet, in the same way as these microbes are removed from the human body," said Barno, "I do not think that even if Smith turns up the gas he can throw any further light on the subject."

Smith rose and lit up the gas, while Henner went over and unlocked the door.

"Mr. Smith," said Miss Turner, "does that really occur in our bodies?"

"Undoubtedly it does," returned Smith. "It has been seen to do so by many investigating medical observers."

"How very funny. Now I must put my hat on," said Miss Turner. "I expect my dear old Joe here every moment. He said he would call for me."

"I can't understand you throwing yourself away on that skinny Josiah Crumblewell, Miss Turner, when there is something so much better to be had."

"You, for instance?" smiled Miss Turner.

"Yes, me. And when are you to make the sacrifice?"

"At Christmas," she replied.

"When do you sail for the home amongst savages in the Pacific Ocean?"

"In the spring."

"Are you sure Joe Crum will call for you?"

"Yes. He ought to be here by now."

"What an obstinate woman you are, Miss Turner."

"Am I? There's Joe. I can tell his step a mile off," said Miss Turner as Josiah Crumblewell was heard hitting his toes against the rickety stairs, as he ascended to the apartment and bore Miss Lucy Turner off to some other abode where the fights between phagocytes and microbes continue unseen by human eyes.

THE COURT DE MORTUIS.

"THIS is a Court de Mortuis," said Vian to me, as I happened to peep into the Dissecting Room, looking for a student. "You can stop and listen to the proceedings if you wish, but you will not be allowed to give evidence, tamper with the jury, dissect any more of the witnesses, or go out for a drink before the case is finished. So there you have it."

Vian, unknown to fame at this time, was a promising member of the English Bar. A big fellow, whose build alone carried considerable weight in any company, and who now looks magnificent as he sits on the Bench crowned with a wig and robed in ermine.

It was late in the afternoon, when daylight had diminished to the degree when work necessarily stopped. It was the busiest time of the winter session and the room was crowded with bodies and bits. Whether the dissecting room was the old L-shaped one, or the modern rectangular hall of enormous dimensions, it is not my intention to record. The customary struggle in dissecting parts

continued during the usual winter hours of from eight to four, when students sweated and stewed over that abomination of tyro anatomists known as the relations of vessels and nerves. Sweated and stewed, just as if their own lives at the time depended on acquiring the knowledge they sought. In their reckless ardour they ignored dissecting-room sore throat contracted by keeping their noses too closely down over the work. Men taken fresh from the country air and country homes and a pure atmosphere, depressed by laborious study, and plunged into the foul vapours of a charnel house, suffer far more than the town-bred students do.

Into such company and in such place had Vian come with some of his medical friends, just in the nick of time, to join in an argument about the proportions the various parts of the body should bear to each other to form the most perfect type of figure. This controversial subject was supplemented by discussion as to what were the best measurements for a woman to have.

Vian, perched on the top of two oak dissecting-room stools, exercised considerable skill in balancing himself and averting disaster. His throne of stools rose at the edge of a circle of about fifteen students, most of whom, attracted by the discussion, now remained to listen to the debate. Some carried books, others cases of scalpels and dissecting paraphernalia, others sticks, and nearly all were smoking

tobacco. The Bench itself smoked the strongest coarse shag.

"This High Court de Mortuis," said Vian, "in spite of one of the best disinfecting agents known to you, I allude to a roaring fire, stinks as badly as the space allotted to the public in a public court on Mondays."

"The case before the Court is, 'The Crowd *v.* a Woman.' Turba *versus* Feminam! Anyone addressing the Bench must be respectful and say my Lud, and not yer warship, as if he were in the notorious Liverpool Police Court about a slum faction fight between the Irish and Welsh."

"Silence in the Court," said Varney.

"As you fellows can't agree amongst yourselves, the only way to settle the cause at issue, instead of having a fight, is for me to hold a court, hear the evidence, and then you can act as a jury and give in a verdict. You medicos never do exactly coincide when we get you in the witness-box, but now the reason of such opposite testimony is plain, for I confess I didn't understand it before. You begin your disputes in the dissecting room, air your fads in the wards, and bury the patient when eight of you are certain he has died of eight totally different diseases. You are bad witnesses and never shine in the witness-box. I'll take an affidavit you are always in a little doubt, you can't even express what you do know, and you are so nervous and shaky when you are telling the truth that no decent man would believe you."

"Pooh, pooh, Vian; if a lawyer told the truth he'd be just as shaky as we are and lose his case straight away."

"I don't intend to lose any of my cases, Varney. You are a lot of philosophers, and thinkers, and not talkers. The strangest part, too, is that you don't seem to understand why your profession is unappreciated by the public, as your leading men so dolefully assert. You are not appreciated because the public has no idea of the extent of your knowledge. Now, Varney, don't waste the time of the Court any more."

"Silence!" shouted Varney, as nobody was speaking.

"Each point," said the Bench, "will be put to the jury separately. Their decision will be final. No appeal to the Privy Council allowed. The verdict of the jury must be the opinion of the majority. Being medicos, if you were locked up for a century you'd never be unanimous.

"It being apparent to the audience that the Bench is unusually shaky, the Bench will require all the support the Bar can afford it. The instability arises from this being a Court of Anatomy not a Court of Law. Williams, just pull that head and neck away from behind me in case I topple over. If my seat be not firmer than this when the Crown invites me, as it is sure to do some day, to ascend the gorgeous forum of an English judge, I shall come a fearful cropper. God save the Queen."

"Let us get on with the case," said Bromley. "In half-an-hour the room will be shut up and we must retire."

"Gentlemen of the jury," continued Vian, "no reflection can be cast upon the witnesses called before you in this case, as they are above reproach. The evidence they give cannot be controverted. It may be supplemented by circumstantial evidence of greater or less value. The direct evidence is beyond cavil. No one can impeach its testimony. The character and honour of the witnesses are beyond assail. They are all present, silently and patiently waiting to be heard. You are surrounded by them. Whatever your verdict may be, it cannot impugn their testimony. The direct witnesses to which I draw your attention, gentlemen, are the numerous bodies undergoing the lengthy process of dissection at the hands of medical students in this High Court de Mortuis. You must free your minds from any previous ill-founded impression you may have conceived that this is a dissecting-room in which I preside. It isn't so at all. It's a Court—a Court de Mortuis. Owing to the orderly conduct of the witnesses, I shall not be called upon to order the Court to be cleared at irregular intervals during the trial, to maintain my dignity."

At this stage Millen dropped his pipe and broke the stem. He indulged in unclassical language.

"Silence in the Court," said Varney.

"My Lud," said Millen, "I must apologise to the

Court for the language I gave expression to. Unfortunately I am addicted to the use of bad language. It is not to be called a vice in my instance, but a misfortune, for it arises from the fact, so my mother informs me, that the nursemaid hit me with a bad egg when I was a baby. My indulgence isn't the result of viciousness any more than a crooked, carious spine is the result of disease in one's own offspring, but the result of an accident when a child, if you credit the avowal of the child's own mother. In other people's children the disease alluded to is caries of the spine, without extenuating circumstances."

"Your truthful explanation is sufficient," said the judge.

"The Court will now hear the cause of *Turba versus Feminam*."

"My Lud," said Bromley, "a woman's waist should be twenty-four inches in circumference. When it is more than that she is fat. When less than that she is liable to snap in two in muscular hands. The liability occurs about twice a week."

"I don't agree with my colleague," said Farre, who was a slim little dandy that a puff of wind would carry away. "The waist of a young woman such as the Court had its eye on the other day in the Strand, should not be more than nineteen inches. One couldn't reach round it with one arm, otherwise."

"Silence!" shouted Varney.

"If there be any further display of hilarity or unseemly conduct, I shall order the Court to be wiped out," said the judge, as he rocked backwards and forwards on the tottering stools.

"I don't suppose any man," continued Farre, "wants to use both arms at once. It is indecent. I don't, I know. When one arm is tired out and the shirt cuff well creased, common sense and fatigue demand that the other arm should be speedily advanced to the rescue. If a waist be more than nineteen inches it is detrimental to the exercise of the proper primary function of a waist."

"What's that?" said the Judge.

"Why for an arm to encircle. You are somewhat dull, my Lud. A larger waist limits the possible number of reckless aspirants to a dangerous situation. The chief object of tight lacing is to be prepared for all contingencies. Even a little fellow ought to have some chance. The kind foresight of women provides it. Their affection prompts them to the sacrifice. A fat old twenty-stoner will suffer a martyrdom of constriction to accommodate a sickly youth. Women realise in silence the force and justness of my observations and do their best to remedy the difficulty with which they are encumbered."

"The Court doesn't want to waste time, Farre. The evidence you tender is very skinny and slight. Let the Court hear unimpeachable witnesses, not this far-fetched flummery of Farre. Bromley, Farre, and

Williams will go round the room and measure all the female waists."

The three gentlemen named complied with the directions. The measures varied from twenty inches to thirty inches. Hopkinson, a big-nosed student, who was eminent in mathematics and mechanics, calculated the average to be twenty-three inches.

"Thank you, gentlemen," said Vian. "The jury can now give their verdict."

"Hold on, Vian, I have a better plan," interposed Evans.

"Counsel must not address the Court in terms of such confounded familiarity. The Court must be addressed as 'my Lud,' unless Counsel wishes to enter a forlorn hope and try and borrow tobacco of the Bench."

"All right, my Lud," continued Evans. "These figures and complaints are subject to retort and a set-off. Take the measure of every man's arm, dead or alive, and it will correct the dead reckoning of Hopkinson's figures of female latitude and longitude. Fifteen of us still lingering in the flesh will make a difference in many calculations in this world."

Consequently, all the arms of the students in the room were measured. Hopkinson's arithmetical computations showed the average length of arm to be thirty inches.

"Seven inches longer than the average circumference of a woman's waist," said the Bench.

"Hum! That's wrong. They ought to coincide. I really must confess I am totally ignorant of these matters and would like counsel to explain——"

"My Lud," interposed Hanson, "the Bench always assumes a silly, child-like innocence, which is ridiculous to onlookers. You're just as bad as a beak who would fine a man ten shillings for smelling the chloroform bottle too long. Just as if a judge——"

"Silence!" shouted Varney.

"Oh, go to the deuce, Varney! Just as if a judge never had been a boy, never stole apples when there was nothing else to steal, never was a young man about town and other disreputable places, never studied for the bar, and never pleaded over other bars; but as a heaven-born saint he received appointment to the position of a judge, and immediately upon taking his seat upon the bench exhibited the most profound learning in law, *pari passu* with the ignorance of the ass in the commonest affairs of everyday life. Such rot is inconsistent with human nature. If he be as clever as he pretends to be on the bench, then he knows more of the world than the younger, less fortunate men who practise at the bar before him. Such a man is a humbug and a hypocrite to pretend he doesn't."

"Silence!" said Varney.

"Fact is, he can't give up the habit of acting and prevaricating. He pretends to judge the worth of evidence given by a stranger who is a witness, and

yet confesses entire ignorance of common slang expressions. These shams make me mad. They'd drive a man to smell the chloroform again as soon as ever he had sobered up."

"I wish," said the judge, with a judicial frown of great severity, "Counsel would confine his remarks to the case. These painful family disclosures are quite unnecessary."

"Gentlemen, the point to consider is this. Female waists twenty-three inches in circumference. Male arms thirty inches long. Arms seven inches longer than waists. You are the doctors and the jury. You must relieve the Court of the difficulty. I leave it entirely in your hands."

"My Lud," said Bromley, "I'll tell you what it is. The proper size is the length of a man's arm with a little bit over for interlocking. Any measurement less than that is a defect. It is unlikely a man has been stretching his arm for any wicked purpose. In fact, the bones won't extend, so he cannot do such a thing. But with a waist it is very different. Farre has shown us the reason women lace in so tightly. The subjacent tissues and organs being compressible, women can almost crush themselves in two by the aid of a powerful ladies' maid. They have overdone the squeezing process and laced themselves in two inches too much to be rational or natural. It is not the result of masculine persuasion but feminine perversity. The weight of evidence favours the return of a verdict against the habit."

"Well, gentlemen," said the Bench, "I shall take the decision of the majority."

Twelve voted in favour of twenty-three inches as the proper measurement for a woman's waist. One little, white, sickly hand was held up in favour of twenty inches. It was Farre's.

"Farre is voting for some other child, not a woman," said Price.

"Verdict entered," said the judge, "for twenty-three inches, with costs for a drink round."

"My Lud," said Wilson, jumping up, "we have omitted to calculate the ratio of circumference to height of body."

"That doesn't matter," replied the Bench. "I'm here to administer the law as I find it. The law of waists is like the laws of the Medes and Persians; it changeth not. Whether it be a woman five feet 10 inches high or a tiny little mite of five feet low makes little difference. Their waists are always the same size round. The jury have delivered their verdict for a twenty-three-inch waist, the Court upholds it, and any woman who disobeys that law does so at her own peril. *Lex non scripta—jus naturale.*"

"The next point for consideration," said Bromley, "is the size of foot. It is useless to talk about the size of boots, they are always two or three sizes too small. When the foot is released from bondage a mass of knobs, distortions, corns, bunions, excres-

cences, and protruberances present themselves to the astonished beholder. How they are packed in the secrecy of the chamber into that piece of leather with a point like a pencil tip is known only to the martyrs. For a woman of 5 feet 6 inches high the length of foot should be 9 inches, and the breadth at the broadest part of the tread $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. From these given quantities Hopkinson will calculate the size of the foot."

"I can't do it," said Hopkinson; "nor can any other man do it. To find the cubic contents would require measures of the circumference and height of the endless knobs which adorn a lady's foot."

"Then how are you going to ascertain whether a woman has a large foot or a small foot?" said the judge.

"We don't know," said Farre, in despair.

There was silence till Evans jumped up in some excitement, precipitating the judge and forum to the floor in an inextricable heap. The judgment-seat being restored, Evans explained his infallible suggestion.

"Hopkinson," said he, "can tear up his note books, break his pencils, give up mathematics, and buy a boot shop. Bromley and Williams can study astronomy and the motions of the heavenly bodies instead of quizzing the boots of every woman who toddles by, and Farre need no longer delude himself that glassy kid necessarily covers fascination."

“ Well, what is it ? ” said the judge. “ What’s all this harangue about ? ”

“ This,” said Evans ; “ we can accurately estimate the size of a woman’s distorted foot by displacement of water. It is the same system that was adopted to ascertain the weight of the Great Eastern paddle-ship ; that is, by calculating the amount of water she displaced.”

“ Bravo ! ” said everybody ; “ feet measured up to 12,000 tons.”

“ Silence ! ” said Varney.

“ A bowl of water must be taken round the dissecting room and every woman’s foot immersed in it up to the level of the most prominent parts of the internal and external malleoli.”

“ What’s that ? ” said the judge ; “ it isn’t slang, or very expressive, otherwise I could interpret it without assistance. Is it catching, Evans ? ”

“ What ! The epiphyses of the tibia and fibula ? ” asked Evans. “ Of course not.”

“ Stop it, stop it,” said the judge ; “ I don’t want any stuff. Let me know how high up you are measuring and I am satisfied.”

“ Oh, is that all ? ” replied Evans ; “ why, to the broadest part of the ankle-joint, of course—to the most prominent points of the projections of the ankle-joint.”

“ Well,” said the judge, at whom everybody was laughing, “ I give in. Go on, Evans.”

"Well," resumed Evans, "now that the court is *au fait* with the subject I will continue. The difference in the height of water between the level at which we started and the level to which the water rises in the basin when the foot is immersed in the aforesaid manner, I repeat, the said foot in the aforesaid manner shows the bulk of water which corresponds to the size of the foot. The bulk can be measured and the answer given in hundredweights, pounds, ounces and grains. Hopkinson will calculate it. The quotient will be the true size of a woman's foot. Let it be thin and long like a broomstick, or broad and flat like a deal board, yet it can be measured with equal facility—measured, weighed, and calculated *ad nauseam*."

"My Lud, Evans has the right idea and also the ability to apply it in a practical way," said a student. "Evans will be a great surgeon yet."

"I can suggest an easier way still to effect this object," ejaculated Williams. "Fill the bowl to the top with water, immerse the foot to the desired depth and catch the overflow in another basin *secundem artem*."

"Hooray!" shouted the students; "Williams to the rescue. Three cheers for the overdraft."

Williams's father lent millions of money to shaky foreign Governments who always would have an overdraft account at the bank.

"The value of a consultation is manifest by the

excellence of the result," dogmatised Williams, in extenuation of his improved system and as a cloak to hide his father's affairs from too much exposure.

"The three gentlemen appointed a Commission of Measurements will now proceed to their duties," said the judge.

They did so, with the result that women's feet were found to vary in size, or weight, or bulk—for the terms are synonymous between twenty-four ounces and twenty-nine ounces—something between a ton and an ounce.

"Fancy the charmer of your life standing on half-a-pound!" said Price, standing on little ceremony.

"Fancy a girl with a quart foot!" said Farre.

"Fancy being kicked after a quarrel by an angel with a half-gallon hoof!" said Hopkinson.

"Silence!" said Varney; "I'd rather be kicked with half-a-pound than half-a-gallon, never mind how nice it might be on other occasions."

"There's a lot of difference," said Dunker, the red-haired student who was considered an authority in these matters, and who, it was believed, had had his ears boxed more often than any other student present. "I submit to the jury the size in ounces."

The voting then proceeded, and on the votes of a majority the proper weight for a 5-feet 6-inch woman's foot was declared to be twenty-five ounces, one pound nine ounces, or one pint and a-quarter.

"The next question," said the judge.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," interrupted Gustow, the anatomical porter of the College, who had just entered the room, "but, if you are ready, I should like to close the rooms, as it has gone four o'clock."

"The business of the court is completed," said Vian, as he toppled over and took his departure with the others.

IN MEMORY OF TO-DAY.

WILKINSON, who has been mentioned in the previous pages as a student who was spoilt by home indulgence, fell in love with a very pretty girl. He was very bad over it. He couldn't read, he couldn't study, he couldn't eat, and he couldn't sleep. Rapid consumption threatened him, and there was danger that he would die of a broken heart and starvation, besides a lot of other diseases which are kept at the hospitals for these kinds of people. He made a great, big stupid of himself. We inoculated him with some new drug called anti-love serum, and some other unreliable preventative medicines. It was useless. He seemed doomed to die of the attack. It was very violent. In fact, it was the first time he had contracted the disease. That accounts for it. We held many consultations over his case without benefit to the patient. Wilkinson, besides all the other diseases produced by an attack of love, was verging on the borders of insanity from its baneful influence. The very pretty girl he was in love with was encouraging him in his suicidal career. It was scandalous. One day in their desperation they

kissed each other! It was the crisis in his fate. He came back to his rooms, and Henner and I went in to see him. We hoped to find him dead and his misery ended. He was still lingering.

He sat at the centre table in a well-furnished, light, cheerful sitting-room, with a mass of paper and a quart bottle of ink before him.

He had spoilt about a ream of paper and used up nearly half the ink trying to write a suitable poem to his girl's rosy mouth. Chaos reigned amongst his stationery. His left elbow rested on the table and his fingers were furrowed through his hair.

Wilkinson wasn't a poet. He was only his mother's pet. Yet he wanted to write his girl a few stanzas on the memorable occasion when, lips to lips and mouth to mouth, he had kissed her.

He couldn't manage it. The words wouldn't flow as quickly as the ink did. He felt a little ashamed of himself when we caught him in the act. He sorrowfully confided to us the depths of his difficulty.

"Oh, Hodgson will write you off some stuff that will do," said Henner.

"I don't want any stuff, Henner," replied Wilkinson, in mild reproach. "I want some true sentiment expressive of the great joy of the hour. It seems to me too good to be lasting and true. I fear at some future period I may awaken to find my lady love may have forgotten the blissful day."

Henner looked across at me, and to this day I

never know how I managed to withhold my laughter.

To cut a long story short, Wilkinson agreed to read the verses, if nothing more, and if he considered them appropriate, he said he would send them to his girl as an expression of his feelings. That should have broken any spell he had thrown over her and tied round her common sense.

I happened to be in the humour, and the following half-dozen stanzas oozed out of me. Henner wanted to substitute some vulgar words because they rhymed so well, but I wouldn't consent to that. Then he and Wilkinson together would strike out a whole line and substitute something else to make variety poetry. I don't know exactly what Wilkinson had been up to, but he put in some unsaintly trash which he styled the sentiment of his soul. But let me be merciful. It hadn't any sense or meaning in it, but he assured us his girl would understand what it referred to. It was no use needlessly spoiling even trashy writing that scanned well, if it did not do anything more, so Wilkinson's mysterious allusions to celestial bliss in a terrestrial kiss I purposely missed.

When it was finished—and it only took two pages of foolscap, full of alterations and scratchings out, and so on—it was copied by Wilkinson on to note paper. Now that was not very much paper wasted, considering the other two fellows did their best to make the composition jerky and rough. Wilky had

copied it out beautifully, and was putting it in an envelope when he noticed a sketch on the back of the paper and had to re-write it and waste more scent on the paper. It was an extraordinary sketch. There were numerous sketches of a similar incomprehensible character on six sheets of foolscap that littered the table. They look like maps of the Gulf of Fundi, where the tide rises and falls twenty-four feet each time.

Wilkinson, it appears, in order to invoke the muse, had been trying to sketch his girl's mouth. You never saw such a mouth in all your life, if it were anything like any of Wilky's sketches. The mouth of a microbe of small-pox was quite pretty to it. It was impossible to say which way up it should be, or even if it ought not to be lying on its side.

"She's been at Gorgonzola cheese and gooseberries," said Henner, "or I'll never be a doctor. I can quite sympathise with you, Wilky. A photographer could not represent that mouth on paper correctly."

"If you once saw it," replied Wilky, "you'd be dissatisfied with all the others afterwards. It does not matter; I'm going to touch her heart with this poetry. There it is. Read it, and if you haven't an angel of your own you can save up a copy to send to one when you get her."

Listen to the verses I, most fortunate of men, transmit to the repository of my ardent passion:—

IN MEMORY OF TO-DAY.

WHEN Father Time his scythe shall ply,
And age has turn'd me grey,
Oh save me then one shallow sigh
In mem'ry of to-day.

When each new courtier shall adore,
And flatt'ry holds full play,
O think of me thou lov'dst before,
In mem'ry of to-day.

When other faces fill thy thoughts,
And mine has found decay,
O may that face thou once besought
Raise mem'ry of to-day.

When other words shall make thee smile,
And mine have pass'd away,
O hush response, for one short while,
In mem'ry of to-day.

When midnight silence clouds thee, sad,
And mis'ry holds her sway,
There's one sweet thought may still be had
In mem'ry of to-day.

When death shall close thy lustrous eyes,
And thou indeed be clay,
No more at last thou canst despise
The mem'ry of to-day.

Wilkinson within a week of the despatch of these lines was back at work at the hospital. Hard at

work, too. His love fit was completely cured. I didn't like to ask him about it, particularly as he seemed so grateful to me for something or other.

Henner found it all out shortly afterwards. It was this.

Wilkinson sent the verses to the pretty girl, and called afterwards with a view, it is supposed, of again poisoning himself with a kiss. The reception he got completely cured him of his love affair. It was a more perfect cure than the serum we injected into him. It staved off the threatened consumption and the broken heart, &c.

His very pretty girl was furious. She let Wilkinson have a piece, and a good large piece, too, of her mind. Those unfortunate verses I had written had thoroughly disgusted her with Wilkinson as a poet and a lover. He received his discharge on the spot, and became a respectable medical student ever afterwards.

THE LAST PAGE OF THE BOOK.

O TELL me now, my lady fair,
 What think you of this world of care,
 Where foul injustice hath its sway
 And crime is lauded day by day ;
 Where innocence is made to rue
 And wickedness escapes its due ;
 Where villainy alone can stand
 And virtue falls by felon hand ;
 Where vice in every act is seen
 And selfishness is god supreme ;
 Where slander marks each word and tone
 And lies are rooted firm as stone ?
 Where every joy is spoilt by pain
 And purest lives show guilty stain ;
 Where men beneath an outward calm
 Conceal a demon full of harm ;
 Where cowards bide with bated breath
 Hoping to miss the grasp of death ;
 Where wealthy souls with barest face
 Defraud the poor, without disgrace ?
 Tell me, that brave is he who dare
 Survive amidst profound despair,
 Knowing that even after life
 Hell's torture could not match the strife !



Hesperomys

